# In the Shadow of Death

# Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

Previously published volumes in this series are listed at the back of this book.

Volume 11

# IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

## Saint Boniface and the
## Conversion of Hessia, 721–54

by

John-Henry Clay

BREPOLS

For Bridget Gale

1914–2007

# Contents

# ILLUSTRATIONS

*Figures*

## *Maps*

This book originated in doctoral research undertaken at the Centre for Medieval Studies in York between 2004 and 2008. The personal and professional debts incurred at every stage of its creation are considerable, and I can only attempt to do them justice here. My first and foremost debt of gratitude is to my doctoral supervisors, Mary Garrison and Jon Finch, without whose constant support and guidance this book would have looked very different, and would have been much the worse for it. My particular thanks also to Tania Dickinson, Ian Wood, Julian Richards, Chris Wickham, and Yitzhak Hen, and especially to Barbara Yorke for her comments on an earlier draft of Chapter 3 and for kindly supplying me with pre-publication copies of her articles on Boniface and Aldhelm.

I am extremely grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for providing funding during the first three years of my research, as well as their generous financial support of my two-month research visit to Vienna in June and July of 2006. The International Office of the University of York kindly supported my stay at the Utrecht Centre for Medieval Studies in May, June, and July of 2005, while an award from the British Academy proved invaluable in my field research in Hesse in the summer of 2009. The final stages of producing the book were aided by the Institut für Mittelalterforschung in Vienna, and its publication was assisted by the Josef Leinweber Prize, which was awarded to my doctoral thesis by the Faculty of Theology at Fulda. I am grateful for all the advice and guidance of the staff at Brepols.

At the Centre for Medieval Studies of the University of York I have found a doctoral community whose warmth, diversity, and enthusiasm is the greatest advantage any researcher could wish for. In particular I would like to mention Helen Birkett, Hannah Burrows, Carolin Esser, Barbara Gribling, Bronach Kane,

# Author's Note

There is some variation among anglophone academics in their use of personal names of figures attached to the Bonifatian mission. I have used the form Lul in preference to Lull or Lullus, and Sturm instead of Sturmi or Sturmus. Otherwise I have followed the prevailing anglicized form of personal names; where the prevailing form is not clear, for the sake of consistency and ease of reference I have used the form as it appears in the index of Frank Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Unless otherwise stated in the relevant footnote, all Latin translations are my own. All English translations of the Vulgate are from Douay-Rheims. In my Latin transcriptions I have followed precisely the orthography of the published edition cited, including variant spellings and the editor's use of consonantal *v* or *u*.

The sources of all images reproduced in this volume have been acknowledged and copyright permission obtained from the relevant parties where they could be traced. In the case of any omissions, the copyright holder is encouraged to contact the author.

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ann. Alam.* | Anon., *Annales Alamannici*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (1826), pp. 24–30 |
| *Ann. Fuld.* | Anon., *Annales Fuldenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 337–414 |
| *Ann. Guelf.* | Anon., *Annales Guelferbtytani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 25–31 |
| *Ann. Laub.* | Anon., *Annales Laubacenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 7–15 |
| *Ann. Laures.* | Anon., *Annales Laureshamenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 22–39 |
| *Ann. Mett.* | Anon., *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. by B. von Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ., 10 (1905) |
| *Ann. Naz.* | Anon., *Annales Nazariani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 25–31 |
| *Ann. Petav.* | Anon., *Annales Petaviani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 7–18 |
| *Ann. reg. Franc.* | Anon., *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ., 6 (1895) |
| *Ann. S. Amand.* | Anon., *Annales sancti Amandi*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 6–14 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ann. Til.* | Anon., *Annales Tiliani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 6–8 |
| *ASC* | *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, III: *MS A*, ed. by J. Bately (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986) |
| BAR | British Archaeological Reports |
| BHL | *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. by Socii Bollandiana, 2 vols (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901); *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis, novum supplementum*, ed. by H. Fros (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1986) |
| CBA | Council for British Archaeology |
| CCSL | Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–) |
| *CdF* | *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis*, ed. by E. Dronke (Kassel: Fischer, 1850; repr. Aalen: Zeller, 1962) |
| CSASE | Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990– ) |
| *FH* | *Fundberichte aus Hessen* |
| *Fred. Cont.* | Anon., *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV*, in in *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov., 2 (1888), pp. 1–193 |
| *HE* | Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) |
| *HJL* | *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* |
| MGH | Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Hannover: Hahn, 1826– ) |
|     Capit. | Capitularia regum Francorum |
|     SS | Scriptores |
|     SS rer. Germ. | Scriptores rerum Germanicarum |
|     SS rer. Merov. | Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum |

| | |
|---|---|
| OE | Old English |
| OHG | Old High German |
| ON | Old Norse |
| OS | Old Saxon |
| PL | *Patrologiae cursus completus [...] Series Latina*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris: Migne, 1844–64) |
| *RGA* | *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by H. Beck and others, 2nd edn, 35 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973– ) |
| S | Charter number in P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968) |
| SSCI | Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1953– ) |
| Tangl | *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. by M. Tangl, MGH, Epistolae selectae, 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916; repr. MGH, 1989) |
| *UBF* | *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, ed. by E. E. Stengel, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 10. 1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1958) |
| *UBH* | *Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld*, ed. by H. Weirich, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 19. 1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1936) |
| *Vita Bonifatii* | Willibald of Mainz, *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Mogutini*, ed. by Levison, MGH SS rer. Germ., 57 (1905), pp. 1–58 |
| *Vita Sturmi* | Eigil, *Eigilis vita S. Sturmi abbatis Fuldensis*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (1829), pp. 365–77 |
| *ZHG* | *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde* |

Part I. Foundations

Twenty men crossing a bridge,
Into a village,
Are twenty men crossing twenty bridges,
Into twenty villages,
Or one man
Crossing a single bridge into a village.

This is old song
That will not declare itself ...

Twenty men crossing a bridge,
Into a village,
Are
Twenty men crossing a bridge
Into a village.

That will not declare itself
Yet is certain as meaning  ...

The boots of the men clump
On the boards of the bridge.
The first white wall of the village
Rises through fruit-trees.
Of what was it I was thinking?
So the meaning escapes.

The first white wall of the village ...
The fruit-trees ...

—Wallace Stevens*

# Introduction

Wherever or whenever it started, it probably started with a prayer. Perhaps it started in a small stone church, with a kneeling man beseeching the protection and support of God and his patrons, St Peter and St Paul. After the prayer, a procession: defining and challenging the world through action, evoking history — the past and the future, known equally to God — by pacing in file out of the church, past the graveyard and down the steep, dry streets of the hilltop town. It had to be a dry day, a good day for tree felling. People watched the procession, people followed it, warriors, farmers, craftsmen, women, and children, none of whom had ever seen anything quite like it before. The man led the procession through the thick-barred gate of the town wall and onto the road that wound to the river below, slipping down the contours to the crossing place. Beyond the river was a village, where people also waited patiently, powerless to act, perhaps unwilling, as the twenty men clumped over the bridge towards them. They filed past the white walls of the village, past the fruit trees, chanting a strange language in a stranger accent, and climbed the path that led beyond the paddocks.

Here, in the bright air of a forest grove, they came to the monstrous oak that bore the name of a demon. The monk at the head of the procession was middle-aged, humbly dressed, and taller by a head than those around him. He stepped forward and began the next act of the drama, his eyes fixed upon the gnarled face of the ancient enemy, on the writhing branches within which Thunaer had ensnared the people of this country since the Fall. Perhaps the monk cut the first notch himself; perhaps he commanded others to do it. But he had friends at his back and an act to perform, and, just as it was right to raise his hands to heaven in prayer, so it was right to bring this oak crashing down to the ground.

It was not a quick job, and there was no thunderbolt from heaven, no godly breath of wind, to help the fellers as they hacked through the ancient wood: old enough, perhaps, to have seen Drusus march by this spot with his legions seven hundred years before. The tree came down, the praise resumed, the event drew to its uncertain close. It would be up to each man and woman present to decide what it all meant, though some already knew, had always known, even if they now berated themselves for ever doubting that it would come to pass.

This event, or an event like this, would be remembered, embellished, dramatized and eventually recorded a generation later by a man who had not been there, had possibly never met anyone who had been. It would pass into the realm of hagiography and myth, and while this would transform much of the substance of the event, it would help generate that much more precious thing: meaning. Men may have wielded the axe, but the oak had fallen by an act of God's will. Perhaps the breath of God had not caused the oak to crash and split into four equal parts as people would later claim, but what did that matter? The ritual, in following the will of God, had made that will manifest. By acting in and through the world the fellers had changed it. The old ways were coming to an end, the ancient demons were being uprooted from the very earth, the landscape was being reborn in Christ, just as each person within it was to be reborn in him. For this truth lay in the hearts of the missionaries: they saw that the world was to be transformed, and then they saw it transformed at their own hands.

## Landscape and Meaning

Fact can be an elusive thing. I am quite sure that the Anglo-Saxon missionary St Boniface felled a sacred pagan oak near Geismar, in the modern German state of Hesse, in AD 723. The rest of the above scene is conjecture. We do not know that Boniface began by praying in the church of St Brigid atop Büraburg, a Frankish hillfort over the river Eder from Geismar, nor that he led a procession across the Eder, nor that the people of Geismar lifted not one finger to save their doomed temple. Each of these fictions is, however, very plausible. Less plausible is that exactly twenty men clumped across the bridge, or that the walls of the village were painted white, or that they rose to view through fruit trees. These details serve only to recall us to the poem of Wallace Stevens quoted before this introduction, and to the message it contains: if fact is elusive like the transient clumps of boots on a wooden bridge, then meaning is slippery like the eels of the Eder beneath. Meaning cannot declare itself, but must be sought out and snatched from the stream. Where we look, and what we catch, are different for

each of us. Sometimes it happens that our own search for meaning brings us to the squirming fishnets of others; and there, too, we are never sure what we may find.

The demolished Donareiche, the 'Oak of Thunaer', has lain at the foot of Boniface's reputation since his martyrdom in 754. It symbolizes the achievement which posterity has granted Boniface in the label 'Apostle of Germany': namely, the overthrow of the pre-Christian gods in what is now Germany, and their replacement by Christ. Yet when I began the research which led to this book, it occurred to me that what religious tradition has always treated as a primarily symbolic event had in 723 a literal aspect which was deserving of further study.[1] Robert Markus has shown that until the fourth century, Christianity, in contrast to the pagan religions of the Mediterranean, was markedly unconcerned with attaching holiness to places: God, as Augustine insisted, was everywhere, most of all within oneself, and was not to be put in a four-walled box like a pagan idol.[2] Yet one lesson we can learn from Geismar is that, for Boniface and his missionary companions, paganism and Christianity were as much about places as people. The paganism of eighth-century Hessians involved belief and behaviour, but both of these were fundamentally integrated into the landscape: thus the landscape itself became contested.

This book is above all an attempt to discover the nature of this contest, and in so doing I have treated the physical landscape in which the mission took place not as a naked arena, but as a crucible of cultural conflict and conversion, at the heart of which, both physically and spiritually, stood the Geismar shrine. Superimposed upon the physical landscape were other landscapes, more abstract yet equally influential on the outcome of the mission, which will appear throughout the coming chapters: the landscapes of politics, of shifting boundaries of settlement and control, of movement and trade, of ecclesiastical governance and religious devotion. Practicality and convention demand that these landscapes be categorized and illustrated as distinct entities, but the starting principle of any historical enquiry, especially those concerned with a particular region, must be that no aspect of human social life has ever existed in isolation.

This multidimensional view of landscape and history guided the study from the outset. My particular attention, however, came to fall on the missionary community itself, most especially on the relationship between the symbolic

---

[1] J.-H. W. Clay, 'Landscapes of Conversion in Eighth-Century Hessia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Anglo-Saxon Mission of St Boniface' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2008).

[2] R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 139–55.

representation of the mission in the letters written by Boniface and his companions to their supporters outside the mission field on the one hand, and the regular trials and experiences of the mission as they experienced it on the other. The portrayal of the mission according to particular topoi, formulas, and motifs can to some extent be reconstructed from the one hundred and fifty or so letters surviving from the mission, most of which were written to or by Boniface. The trials, experiences, and results of the mission must be reconstructed through more multifarious means, including the use of historical, archaeological, toponymical, geographical, and anthropological sources.

Taken alone, either of these two perspectives of portrayal and experience would give us an intriguing but two-dimensional insight into the community of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Hessia. Only by combining the two perspectives can we approach a three-dimensional understanding of their worlds of meaning: how they viewed the world, how they understood and defined their place within it, and why they acted the way they did. By the end of this study I will have shown that the Christian missionaries in Hessia sought to confront and 'convert' the pagan landscape as well as its pagan inhabitants; that Geismar was merely one disputed shrine among many; and that the highly symbolic portrayal of the mission by Boniface and his companions both reinforced and was reinforced by their missionary strategy.

## *Methodology*

### The Scope of the Study

There are three elements of the scope of the study to be defined here: chronological, geographical, and thematic. The chronological focus of this study is the mission of Boniface in Hessia, that is from his arrival there in 721 to his death in 754. However, the importance of historical context is such that 721 and 754 are not absolute limits. My discussions of both the West Saxon and Hessian contexts prior to the mission will cover a period from the mid-seventh century to Boniface's arrival in Hessia, while certain aspects of my discussion will venture as late as 786. This year saw the death of Lul, Boniface's follower and chosen successor as Bishop of Mainz, and is a *terminus ante quem* for those letters — to be discussed shortly — which post-date Boniface's martyrdom. I will also address some important historical events in Hessia after 754, in particular Charlemagne's destruction of the pagan Saxon shrine near Eresburg in 772, since I believe that they can also inform our understanding of the Bonifatian mission.
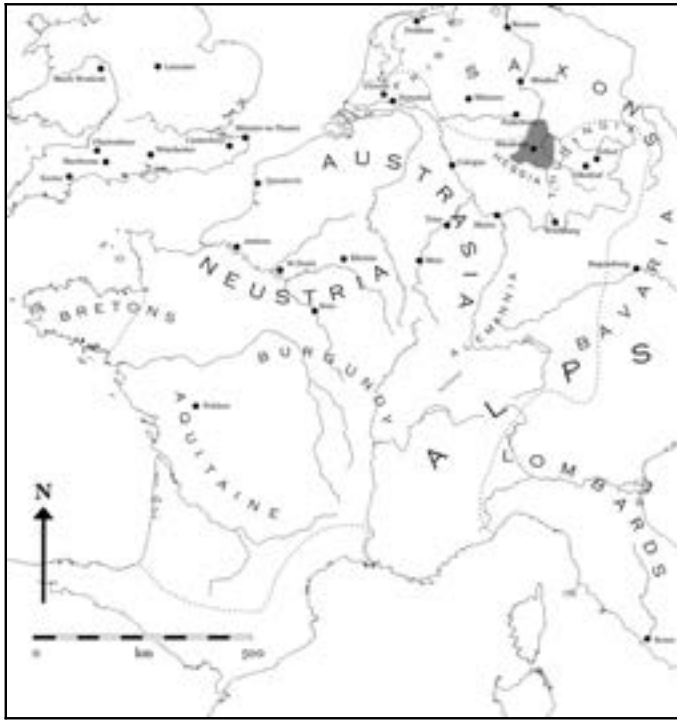
Map. 1. The Frankish territories *c.* 700.

The geographical focus also requires some clarification, especially because English-language studies of Boniface and his mission to date have tended to use the name 'Hesse' in an anachronistic and potentially misleading sense. Briefly put, the modern state of Hesse, which stretches from Kassel in the north to the Rhine-Maine region in the south, is many times larger than the early medieval region from which it ultimately derives its name. Hence when a contemporary source refers to Boniface's initial mission among the Hessians, one might naturally assume that they inhabited all of what is now Hesse, and thereby imagine that Boniface's authority extended much farther into the Frankish Rhineland than was in fact the case. According to eighth- and ninth-century charter evidence, the Hessians lived only in the far north of modern Hesse. This culturally and historically distinct area, approximately equal in area to the English county of Devon, is called *Althessen* (Old Hesse) in German, and in this study I shall simply use the conveniently antiquated Latin name *Hessia* to refer to it. I shall use the term *Hesse* only when referring to the modern state (see Map 1).

There are no early medieval maps of Hessia, and attempting to define its exact political borders would be a fruitless and anachronistic task. By the mid-eighth century it had long been perceived as an ethnically distinct region, and it gained formal definition only when Boniface established his ecclesiastical provinces in Germania. Thereafter it appears in the cartulary traditions of Fulda and Hersfeld as the *pagus Hessorum*, the 'territory of the Hessians', and the area I have delineated as Hessia on Map 1 is determined by the distribution of Fulda's and Hersfeld's eighth- and ninth-century properties that lay within this *pagus*.[3] These boundaries should only be taken as an approximation, for the extent of the *pagus Hessorum*, in as much as it was ever clearly defined at all, may have altered repeatedly between the mid-eighth century and the end of the ninth century. The small tribal grouping of the Wedrecii, for example, was based along the river Wetter, which lay firmly within the *pagus Hessorum* according to the charter tradition.[4] The densely settled core of Hessia, however, appears to have been preserved within the pre-Reformation borders of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar, which, as we shall see in Chapter 7, most probably dated from Boniface's ecclesiastical organization of the region.[5] Within Hessia itself, I will pay special attention to the northern areas which adjoined Saxon-controlled territory (*Saxonia* or *pagus Saxonum* in contemporary sources). I will use the term *borderlands* to describe the poorly defined and fluctuating Hessian-Saxon frontier.

As for the thematic focus of the study, it is important to state that my primary concern is with the missionary community centred on Boniface and not with the indigenous Hessians. This focus reflects the nature of the historical sources, sources which I believe are invaluable if we are to understand the worlds of meaning and perception of any given group. Had the indigenous Hessians and Saxons left a wealth of historical material, this book could have taken the form of a comparative study and would have been very different. As it happens, the surviving written sources which relate to pre-Christian forms of religion in Hessia and Saxony, though extremely scarce and difficult to interpret, will form a small but important part of my study and will be used in conjunction with topographical and place-name evidence.[6] The Hessians are also virtually invisible in

---

[3] For a full distribution map of these properties, see F. Backhaus, 'Die Gaue vor und nach 900', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by F. Uhlhorn, F. Schwind, and E. E. Stengel (Marburg: Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliche Landeskunde, 1984), pp. 41–43, Karte 8a.

[4] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 197–200.

[5] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 331–41.

[6] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 280–91.

the archaeological record: as we shall see in Chapter 4, datable forms of pottery, furnished burials, and major fortifications can all be conclusively related to growing Frankish influence in the area between the mid-sixth and early seventh centuries. Although the nature of the evidence has thus determined my focus on Boniface and his missionaries, it must be remembered that the historical and archaeological invisibility of the Hessians are not symptoms of a passive or moribund society. Taken together, the historical, archaeological, and toponymic evidence suggests that the mission on the Hessian-Saxon borderlands involved syncretism, conflict, and resistance in which the people of Hessia were very active participants.

I should also justify the scope of a book which is, in essence, a dedicated regional study of a much larger historical process. After all, Boniface's missionary activity stretched for almost 1,000 kilometres, from the Dutch litoral to the farthest end of Bavaria. From Hessia he expanded his mission into the neighbouring state of Thuringia, the long-standing mission in Frisia also came under his direction, and for the last twenty years of his life he was drawn into the reform of the Austrasian and Bavarian churches. He journeyed to Rome on three occasions, corresponded with four successive popes, and became a crucial figure in the ecclesiastical politics of Francia. As we shall see in the next chapter, few European saints can equal him in prominence and modern-day political importance. Why, then, undertake a study which focuses on Hessia alone?

There are good reasons for doing so. The Hessian mission can, on the one hand, be understood as merely one part of a long-term process of expansion of Frankish-sponsored Christianity east of the Rhine. On the other hand, it can be viewed as a single chapter in the life of Boniface himself. These approaches, typically followed in scholarship to date,[7] are highly instructive from a broad historical standpoint and form the foundations upon which this study builds. They are not, however, perspectives which I intend to develop directly here. Nor am I am seeking to discover what Elias called the '*order* underlying historical *changes*, their mechanics and concrete mechanisms',[8] or to build an abstract model, Marxist, cultural-ecological, or otherwise, to explain the functioning components of society.

It is true that there were large-scale forces operating, without which the mission could not have proceeded, or would have had very different results, and these

---

[7] See Chapter 2, below, pp. 26–31.

[8] N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. by E. Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. xv, emphasis his.

must be understood. Yet here it is my concern to understand how the individual — more accurately, a select community of similarly minded individuals — can be fitted into this larger picture, and there is little room for the individual in a society submerged by the tide of the *longue durée*. We shall instead try to view the village and the kingdom, the particular and the general, simultaneously, using one to inform our understanding of the other; history becomes a living fractal in which basic rules of social discourse produce patterns of infinite, unpredictable complexity at every level of human engagement. I have chosen Hessia to undertake this study in part because Boniface chose it. Hessia saw the beginning of his career as an independent missionary, it was the Frankish region least influenced by Christianity before his arrival, and it remained at the heart of his mission field for the rest of his life. As we shall see in the next chapter, it also has an excellent tradition of archaeological research which provides a firm basis for interdisciplinary study.

## Primary Historical Sources

The major primary sources relating to the Anglo-Saxon mission in Hessia are the collected letters of Boniface and Lul and the later saints' lives of several Anglo-Saxon missionaries. Additional sources which provide some political and social context in Hessia include the surviving charters of the monasteries of Fulda and Hersfeld and a number of Frankish chronicles and annals. For the West Saxon context, the most important sources are Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the writings of Aldhelm, and the law code of King Ine. The Anglo-Saxon material is relevant only to Chapter 3, the monastic charters to Chapter 7, and so these sources will be discussed more fully when they are called upon. Here we shall concentrate on those sources which will be referred to throughout the book: the letters of Boniface and Lul; the saints' lives; and the Frankish chronicles and annals.

About one hundred and fifty letters survive of Boniface and Lul, and these provide the only directly contemporary accounts of the mission. They include letters written between the mission field and Anglo-Saxon England along with letters to and from several popes, and are preserved in three eighth- or ninth-century manuscripts:[9]

---

[9] On the manuscript transmission of the Bonifatian correspondence after the ninth century, see H. Hahn, 'Die Briefe und Synoden des Bonifaz', *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, 15

1) Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS Lat. 8112 (Mainz, s. viii/ix)

2) Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Rastatt 22 (Mainz, s. ixmed)

3) Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 751 (Mainz, s. ixmed)

The Vienna manuscript includes letters written between Boniface and other correspondents apart from the popes, along with some letters of Aldhelm (brought to the Continent by the missionaries) and letters written to and by Lul both before and after Boniface's death in 754.[10] The Munich and Karlsruhe manuscripts contain the papal correspondence along with a number of other letters also found in the Vienna manuscript. The late sixteenth-century Magdeburg Centuriators produced their edition of the letters using only the Vienna manuscript;[11] the first scholarly analysis and critical edition of the complete corpus of letters was by Jaffé in 1866,[12] whose work was followed in 1892 by a fresh edition produced for the MGH by Dümmler.[13] A third critical edition was published by Tangl in 1916, also as part of the MGH, and this has become the standard edition of the letters used by scholars since.[14] All citations from the letters of Boniface and Lul in this study are from Tangl's edition.

There are several points to bear in mind when using the letters as a source. First, chronological precision is often counterbalanced by geographical imprecision: although many of the letters most useful for this chapter can be securely dated to a particular year, in the case of papal communiqués often to a specific day, the remarks made in the letters regarding Boniface's mission tend to lack associated place-names or even the names of provinces (e.g., Hessia or Thuringia).

---

(1875), 97–115; A. J. Nürnberger, 'Die Bonifatius — literatur der Magdeburger Centuriatoren', *Neues Archiv*, 11 (1886), 9–41; A. J. Nürnberger, 'Verlorene Handschriften der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius', *Neues Archiv*, 7 (1882), 353–81; *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. by M. Tangl, MGH, Epistolae selectae, 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916; repr. MGH, 1989), pp. vi–xxxix (henceforth Tangl).

[10] W. Diekamp, 'Die Wiener Handschrift der Bonifatius-Briefe', *Neues Archiv*, 9 (1884), 9–28.

[11] Nürnberger, 'Die Bonifatiusliteratur', pp. 16–17, 27.

[12] *Monumenta Moguntina*, ed. by P. Jaffé, Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum, 3 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1866), 8–315.

[13] *S. Bonifatii et Lulli epistolae*, in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Epistolae, 3 (1892), pp. 215–433.

[14] Tangl.

It is therefore uncertain to which part of his mission field many of the letters relate. Second, we must also remember that the letters preserved in the Vienna, Karlsruhe, and Munich manuscripts in the ninth century may not be at all representative of the thousands of letters that must have been written by clerics during the thirty-five years of Boniface's mission. Perhaps most important, there is very little surviving 'internal' correspondence, that is, letters written between missionaries in the field: the manuscripts overwhelmingly contain letters written between missionaries and Anglo-Saxon or Roman contacts who were far removed from Germania, and most of these letters are to or from Boniface or Lul. Regular progress reports, situation updates, special requests or instructions, notes between friends and family members, not to mention mundane lists of people and supplies and the countless other ephemera produced by any literate, tightly organized missionary community — almost none of this has come down to us.[15]

Third, the precise mechanics of preservation of the letters of Boniface and Lul in the decades prior to the creation of the Vienna, Karlsruhe, and Munich manuscripts are all but impossible to ascertain. We do not know how far the compilers of the ninth-century manuscripts selected and discarded letters that were available to them in Mainz or elsewhere, and how far they attempted to preserve whatever they had to hand that seemed worth preserving, according to what criteria. Andy Orchard has argued that a number of the 'private' epistles of the Vienna manuscript appear to have been preserved as stylistic templates, with the name of sender or recipient (or both) removed,[16] but this pertains only to a fraction of the entire collection. Papal letters seem to have been preserved with special care, no doubt because of the abundant guidance in matters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy that they contained, but these, too, demonstrably represent only part of the correspondence between Boniface and Rome over the course of thirty-five years.[17]

---

[15] Mary Garrison has examined such accidentally preserved ephemera, in particular the tablets of Vindolanda and Novgorod, in order to illuminate the kinds of everyday written sources that tended not to be preserved through medieval manuscript transmission (M. Garrison, '"Send More Socks": On the Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters', in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. by M. Mostert, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 69–99).

[16] A. Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 30 (2001), 15–38 (pp. 17–19).

[17] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 190–93, on the letter of Boniface to Rome in 722, alluded to in the *Vita Bonifatii* of Willibald, which does not survive. Many more letters from the popes to Boniface survive than vice versa.

Nor do we know how or where Boniface organized and archived his own correspondence, or if he did so in a systematic fashion at all; we might infer his archival practices from broader early medieval practice,[18] but Boniface was highly mobile, frequently moving from one base to another across many hundreds of kilometres, and the careful preservation of every letter he wrote and received for posterity was not among his foremost concerns. We know, for instance, that the Vienna, Karlsruhe, and Munich manuscripts were all originally compiled in Mainz, but Boniface did not acquire that city as his episcopal seat until 746. We may well ask where his personal letters were stored before then, and what proportion of them, assuming that they were not lost or deliberately destroyed before 746, actually found their way to Mainz. When using the surviving letters as a historical source, we must therefore be constantly aware that, invaluable as they are, they remain but clusters of flickering candles in a landscape of overwhelming shadow.

The saints' lives include Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* (written between 754 and 768),[19] Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*[20] and *Vita Wynnebaldi*[21] (754x68), Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* (early ninth century),[22] Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* (794x800),[23]

---

[18] On the preservation and transmission practices of early medieval letters, see M. Garrison, 'Letters to a King and Biblical Exempla: The Example of Cathuulf and Clemens Peregrinus', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 305–28 (pp. 319–20).

[19] Willibald of Mainz, *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by W. Levison, MGH SS rer. Germ., 57 (1905), pp. 1–58 (henceforth *Vita Bonifatii*); for an English translation, see Willibald of Mainz, *The Life of St Boniface*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by C. H. Talbot (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954), pp. 25–62. On dating, see I. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001) pp. 61–64; *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. by the Socii Bollandiana, 3 pts (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898– 1901), and *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, *novum supplementum*, ed. by H. Fros (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1986), 1400 (henceforth BHL).

[20] Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *Vita Willibaldi*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 86–106; for an English translation, see Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *The Hodoeporicon of St Willibald*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 153– 77. Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 64; BHL, 8931.

[21] Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *Vita Wynnebaldi*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 106–17. Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 64; BHL, 8996.

[22] Liudger, *Vita Gregorii abbatis Traiectensis*, ed. by W. Levison, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 63–79. Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 111–12; BHL, 3680.

[23] Eigil, *Eigilis vita S. Sturmi abbatis Fuldensis*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (1829), pp. 365–77 (henceforth

Lupus of Ferrières' *Vita Wigberti* (836)[24] and Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae* (*c*. 836).[25] Although Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* in particular is noted for its relative reliability concerning historical events,[26] all hagiographical texts were nonetheless composed for the purpose of the edification of monastic communities or the promotion of a particular saint's cult, rather than the impartial recording of history.[27] Their portrayal of historical events and figures must be viewed in light of these purposes and interests, in particular the accounts of those texts which were written more than two generations after Boniface's death, and consequently lack the authority of contemporary witnesses.

Frankish chronicles and annals that record events near Hessia between 721 and 768 include the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (covering a period from 721 to 751),[28] the *Earlier Annals of Metz*,[29] the *Royal Frankish Annals* (from 741),[30] the *Annals of Fulda*,[31] and the laconic entries of the 'minor' Carolingian annals.[32] These sources make virtually no direct references to Hessia, which

*Vita Sturmi*). The most recent critical edition is Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, in *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigils von Fulda: Literarkitisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, ed. by P. Engelbert, Veröffent-lichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 29 (Marburg: Historische Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 1968); Eigil, *The Life of St Sturm*, in *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 181–202. Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 69–70; BHL, 7924.

[24] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti abbatis Friteslariensis*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 36–43. Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 66; BHL, 8879.

[25] Rudolf of Fulda, *Vita Leobae abbatissae Biscofesheimensis*, ed. by G. Waitz, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 118–31; Rudolf of Fulda, *The Life of Saint Leoba*, in *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 205–26. Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 67–68; BHL, 4845.

[26] Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 61–64.

[27] Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 18–20; P. Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des hl. Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754–1200)*, Quellen und Abhandlung zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda, 26 (Fulda: Parzeller, 1993), pp. 1–5.

[28] Anon., *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV*, in *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov., 2 (1888), pp. 1–193 (henceforth *Fred. Cont.*).

[29] Anon., *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. by B. von Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ., 10 (1905) (henceforth *Ann. Mett.*).

[30] Anon., *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ., 6 (1895) (henceforth *Ann. reg. Franc.*).

[31] Anon., *Annales Fuldenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 1 (1826), pp. 337–414 (henceforth *Ann. Fuld.*).

[32] These eight closely related annals, edited by Pertz in one volume, are: Anon., *Annales sancti Amandi*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 6–14 (henceforth *Ann. S. Amand.*);

was always something of a backwater to the Frankish elite, a place whose chief importance was as a strategic bottleneck and military staging post on the Saxon frontier. They are useful, however, in that they provide a framework of Frankish military campaigns against the Saxons which allow us to place the Hessian mission within its broader political context.

As with the letters and saints' lives, there are factors that complicate our use of these chronicles and annals as historical sources. The *Continuations of Chronicle of Fredegar*, for instance, provide a closely contemporary account of events between 721 and 768, but appear to have been written to commemorate Pippin's crowning as king in 751, and were supplemented for a similar purpose upon Charlemagne's rise to the throne in 768. As a result they are highly partisan in tone and represent a perspective on recent history that was above all concerned with the glorification of the early Carolingians.[33] The early Carolingian annals record several otherwise unattested campaigns during the 710s and 720s only in very brief terms, usually with a single sentence that tells us nothing about the precise location, cause, or result of the event.[34] The other sources were all written considerably later than the events they recount: the first part of the *Royal Frankish Annals* towards the end of the eighth century;[35] the *Earlier Annals of Metz* in 805;[36] and the *Annals of Fulda*, written in the ninth century but drawing

Anon., *Annales Tiliani*, ibid., pp. 6–8 (henceforth *Ann. Til.*); Anon., *Annales Laubacenses*, ibid., pp. 7–15 (henceforth *Ann. Laub.*); Anon., *Annales Petaviani*, ibid., pp. 7–18 (henceforth *Ann. Petav.*); Anon., *Annales Lauresbamenses*, ibid., pp. 24–39 (henceforth *Ann. Laures.*); Anon., *Annales Alamannici*, ibid., pp. 24–30 (henceforth *Ann. Alam.*); Anon., *Annales Guelferbtytani*, ibid., pp. 25–31 (henceforth *Ann. Guelf.*); Anon., *Annales Nazariani*, ibid., pp. 25–31 (henceforth *Ann. Naz.*).

[33] P. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 7–8; R. McKitterick, 'The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 1–20 (pp. 3–4).

[34] A typical example is an entry for the year 720 in *Ann. S. Amand.*, p. 6: 'Karlus bellum habuit contra saxones'. Virtually identical entries are found under the same year in every other minor annal except *Ann. Guelf.* Neither the *Ann. Mett.* nor the *Ann. Fuld.* mention a campaign by Charles Martel in this year.

[35] For a full discussion, see R. McKitterick, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 31–43.

[36] Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, p. 8; on the political context of the text's creation, see Y. Hen, 'The *Annals of Metz* and the Merovingian Past', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 175–90.

on earlier annalistic material, including some historically accurate Fulda traditions of Boniface's life and work.[37]

### The Structure of the Study

I have divided this book into three parts: Foundations, Context, and Mission. With the first part, comprising Chapters 1 and 2, I intend to establish the methodological and historiographical basis of my study. The second part is dedicated to elucidating the wider historical context as fully as possible. The particularities of Boniface's mission in Hessia cannot be understood without an appreciation of his wider mission field, the political landscape of the Frankish Rhineland, the Frankish-Saxons wars, the ambitions of the Papacy north of the Alps, liturgical practices, the West Saxon church of his upbringing, and so on. For this reason, I have devoted Chapters 3 and 4 to elucidating the West Saxon and pre-721 Hessian contexts respectively.

In Chapter 3 we shall examine the world of Boniface the youth and young man. He was scion of a noble Saxon family whose identity rested on a belief that they were, as a race, descended from shiploads of Germanic adventurers who had landed on the shores of Britain many generations before. But he was also a monk and cleric, a rising star in the energetic West Saxon church, and it was an idealized model of this church which he sought to bring to his Saxon cousins across the sea.

Chapter 4 will reconstruct the context that awaited Boniface in Hessia. The historical sources are slight for the period before his arrival, but archaeology tells a dramatic story of its own: how, over the course of the seventh century, Hessia slipped ever deeper into the orbit of the Frankish Rhineland, changing from an inconsequential outlier of the Merovingian domain, a cultural and economic backwater of impoverished paganism, into a strategic hub of the Frankish frontier. The Franks poured money and men into enormous fortifications, brought with them new technologies and the first traces of Christianity in Hessia, cut back the primeval forests for new settlement and embarked on the savage Frankish-Saxon wars that would last for a hundred years. Hessia, when Boniface arrived, was no longer a quiet backwater, but a seething cauldron of social and political change.

Part III, Chapters 5 to 8, will focus on the mission itself. In order to be able to study individual aspects of the mission in detail while retaining an awareness of

---

[37] See Timothy Reuter's introduction to the annals in Anon., *The Annals of Fulda*, trans. by T. Reuter, Ninth-Century Histories, 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 1–9.

its long-term progress and development, Chapter 5 will consist of a critical chronology of the mission. This chapter will also highlight the various points of historical uncertainty or dispute which will have an impact on the study.

In Chapter 6 we shall consider the literary discourse through which Boniface and his correspondents in Rome and Britain represented the mission. This will involve a close textual analysis of the letters of Boniface and Lul, and will reveal a significant contrast between the nature of the discourse between Boniface and Rome on the one hand, and his compatriots on the other. That is, between Anglo-Saxons the use of recurring motifs and themes led to a consistent and powerful portrayal of the missionary as a suffering exile who was pledged to bring the light of Christ to the darkness of Germania, which they regarded as the homeland of the Anglo-Saxon *gens*. The papal correspondence, by comparison, is sober and prosaic: the central theme of exile, *peregrinatio*, is entirely absent, along with the Romantic figure of the *exul Germanicus*.

Chapter 7 will focus on the experiences of the missionaries in Hessia, using hitherto neglected toponymic evidence in order to explore what could be described as the forgotten pre-Christian sacred landscape of Hessia, and the strategy devised by the missionaries in order to supplant it. Through the analysis of place-names and early church foundations I will identify individual sites which appear to have held religious significance for either Christian missionaries or pagans. Having identified the significant features of the Christian and pre-Christian landscapes, I will discuss the nature of the confrontation between the pagan and Christian sacred landscapes. The remainder of Chapter 7 will be devoted to an exploration of the challenges and experiences encountered by Boniface and his companions during the Hessian mission. These included negotiations with important figures at all levels of Frankish lay and ecclesiastical society; the establishment and maintenance of a material support base for the missionaries; evangelization techniques; pre- and post-baptismal instruction; the organization of the mission field into a coherent system of churches; and the protection of the mission field from infiltration by 'morally corrupt' or unorthodox preachers.

Such was the complexity of Boniface's mission in Hessia that we can only deepen our understanding of it by taking such a multifaceted approach, and in the concluding chapter I will draw together the arguments of the previous chapters. If in Chapter 6 we attain an understanding of the self-perception of the missionaries and their attitudes towards those whom they attempted to convert and Christianize, we are better placed to understand the processes of conversion and evangelization explored in Chapter 7. We shall see that the representation of

the mission field in the letters of the missionaries formed a mental arena for a discourse of shared suffering and hope for salvation, through which those involved in the mission and those physically removed from it expressed a common identity and aim. In Hessia itself, the missionaries attempted to transform the cultural identity of the indigenous pagans through the systematic confrontation and eventual supplantation of numerous pagan shrines with their own chapels and churches, a process in which Boniface was almost certainly the main directing force. The strong soteriological aspect of the missionaries' self-identity led them to endure hardships and dangers that severely limited the expansion of the mission. In this way, the poeticized conceptualization of the mission in the letters was both a reflection of, and a guiding influence on, the manner and direction of its execution.

# Historiography

We will not begin, like Boniface, in Wessex, but in Erfurt, main city of the German state of Thuringia and one of the original bishoprics founded by Boniface in the 740s. If one takes the most direct route from Erfurt to Fulda, Boniface's most famous monastery and his eventual place of burial, one must pass through an open, hilly region known as the Rhön. There are few prettier parts of Germany. The Rhön has none of the spectacle of the Bavarian Alps, or the Wagnerian drama of the middle Rhine, or even the foreboding wildness of the nearby Thuringian forests, but is a country cleared and tamed by centuries of quiet agriculture, its hilltops stripped of trees, its valleys and rocky slopes devoted now to pasture and moorland: prime hiking country, a nature lover's paradise of wide skies and cluttered hamlets with warm, welcoming names like Humfershausen and Apfelbach.

In the eighth century, this region was occupied by a tribe known as the Graffelti, one of the principal groups targeted by Boniface's mission and the one that lay at the very heart of his territory.[1] He wrote a letter in 751 — at this time an old man of failing eyesight and indomitable willpower — informing the Pope in Rome that he had founded a monastery at Fulda 'in medio nationum predicationis nostrae', in the midst of the peoples to whom he had been preaching, and requesting that he be allowed to retire and die there: 'For four peoples to whom, through the grace of God, we have been preaching the Word of Christ dwell around about this place, as is well known, and I can with your intercession

---

[1] On the early medieval tribal territories in the region of modern Hesse, see Backhaus, 'Die Gaue vor und nach 900'.

still be useful to them as long as I have life and wisdom.'[2] Shortly after Boniface's death, Fulda began to store charters which describe an ongoing process of settlement expansion and foundation in the Rhön, documenting the development of landholding in the region which led to the landscape we see today.[3] But while farmers were clearing woodland and striking fence posts into the earth, Boniface and his followers and successors were uprooting and transforming the spiritual and social landscape in a way that was equally fundamental, and even more long-lasting.

To the south of Fulda, on the road between the villages of Heubach and Oberzell, a tiny hut covers a spring known as *Foarzbürn*. The name is derived from *Bonifatius-Born* and means 'the Boniface spring'; it first appears as *Fartzborn* on a map of 1732, but its origins probably lie in much older cultic practices.[4] A little over a kilometre away stands an oak called the *Bonifatiuseiche*. The present tree is less than a century old, but was planted to replace an older oak of massive size, some 14 metres high, which fell in 1923. This tree was known as the 'thousand-year Boniface oak', granting it dubious if not impossible antiquity, and was reputed to have been used as shelter by Boniface and his followers on a journey between Fulda and Mainz.[5] That this claim, and the many others like it scattered across Hesse, pay little notion to our concepts of historical plausibility does not reduce their significance here. For they demonstrate how names and traditions can become rooted in the landscape, stubborn and enduring, forever evolving, outlasting even the most formidable oak.

---

[2] 'Quattuor etenim populi, quibus verbum Christi per gratiam Dei diximus, in circuitu loci huius habitare dinoscuntur, quibus cum vestra intercessione, quamdiu vivo vel sapio, utilis esse possum': Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, l. 31, to p. 194, l. 1. The 'four peoples', though unnamed here, probably included the Hessians (west) and Thuringians (east), and perhaps the Saxons (north), Lognai (west), Graffelti or Bavarians (south), depending on how one defines *populi*. In his translation, E. Emerton rendered *quattuor populi* as '*the* four peoples', adding the definite article and thereby implying that the four peoples included all those whom Boniface had evangelized, but whether or not this was the case is unclear (*The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by E. Emerton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940; repr. 2000), p. 137).

[3] W. Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte der fränkischen Ostbewegung vor Karl dem Groâen', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by W. Schlesinger, Nationes, 2 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1975), pp. 9–61 (p. 51).

[4] M. Mott, 'Der Name "Bonifatius" in den Flurbezeichnungen', in *Bonifatius: Vom Angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by M. Imhof and G. K. Stasch (Petersberg: Imhof, 2004), pp. 195–202 (pp. 197–99).

[5] Mott, 'Der Name "Bonifatius"', p. 199.

It so happened that on the day of my journey from Erfurt to Fulda, during a bicycle pilgrimage of sorts in the summer of 2004, defeated by the fatigue of crossing the Thuringian mountains and by a determined westerly wind that seemed to blow from the crypt of Fulda itself, I decided to find lodgings at one of the little farming villages of the Rhön. I told the middle-aged landlady of the pension that I was in the opening stages of a study on Boniface, and was surprised when she appeared to have no idea who he was. I explained that he was a missionary from England who had helped convert much of central Germany in the eighth century, including the Rhön. 'Ah', she replied, somewhat enlightened, 'probably *Catholic*'.

Fame was a strange thing, I concluded, if it could bring me from England to the heart of Boniface's missionary territory on the 1250th anniversary of his martyrdom, a year marked by exhibitions, celebrations, and at least two stage dramatizations of his life and death, and yet fail to reach a woman who lived not half an hour's drive from his place of rest in Fulda. And again in 2009, when I was living in the former Hessian-Saxon borderlands south of the Diemel, those among my neighbours who had heard of Boniface all seemed to believe that the felling of the Oak of Jupiter had taken place not at Geismar in the Schwalm-Eder district of Fritzlar, but at the local town of Hofgeismar. One might travel to the village called *Geismar* in south-west Hessia, or to the Geismar just across the border with Thuringia, and perhaps encounter similar beliefs.[6]

These episodes reminded me how transient and malleable historical figures and their deeds can become in oral tradition. Nobody remembers the past for its own sake; all saints' cults, no matter when or where the saint in question lived, are constructions of particular times and places, not least the cult of St Boniface, Apostle of the Germans, missionary, reformer, and martyr, whose well-documented life has been embellished, if not with pure fictions, at least with emphases that he himself would have found rather surprising. One certainly wonders what he would have made of having his own name attached to a spring

---

[6] There is in fact no conclusive proof that the Oak of Jupiter was felled at the Geismar in the Schwalm-Eder district, for the only near-contemporary reference, in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, l. 13, simply states 'in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere', with no further clues as to the location. The Schwalm-Eder Geismar, however, lies in the densely settled core of Hessia, next to both Boniface's first monastic foundation at Fritzlar and the major Frankish hillfort of Büraburg, and thus the historical context makes it preferable to the other settlements of the same name. See H. B. Wenck, *Hessische Landesgeschichte*, 3 vols (Frankfurt: Warrentrapp and Wenner, 1783–1803), II, pt I, 234; T. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1954), p. 148.

mere kilometres from his place of rest, when he spent so much energy condemning such nature-focused cultic behaviour, and despised Christians who permitted or encouraged it.[7]

## *Boniface*

### Boniface as a Modern Saint

That the figure of Boniface, almost since the moment of his death in 754, has been appropriated and interpreted according to a galaxy of interests and biases was especially evident in the promotional media for the 1250th anniversary celebrations in Fulda. Today Boniface is a national symbol of German Christianity as a whole and not just of German Catholicism, despite the origins of this symbol in early nineteenth-century, anti-Lutheran Catholic nationalism.[8] From the beginning of the Cold War he was also adopted as a political symbol of anti-Communist, Christian Western Europe, and his significance exaggerated to an extent that no modern historian could justify. At Fulda's 1200th anniversary celebrations of Boniface's martyrdom in 1954, the West German Chancellor Adenauer proclaimed these words:

> Boniface is not only the Apostle of the Germans. He is a European. [...] [Boniface] was not just a founder and designer of a network of bishoprics, but, aside from his work for the Church, through his journeys in France and Italy he awoke a sense of unity among the peoples of Western Europe.[9]

Boniface has not entirely lost his political role in the new, post-Communist secular world of Western Europe. In 2005, Bishop Heinz Josef Algermissen of Fulda wrote that Boniface's achievements were 'an important milestone on the

---

[7] Ironically enough, at the papal Synod of 745 a letter of Boniface was read aloud in which he angrily accused the heretic and former bishop Aldebert of dedicating chapels to himself near certain springs. See Tangl, ep. 59, p. 111, l. 11, to p. 112, l. 12.

[8] W. Müller, 'Jubiläen und Heiligengedenken: Von den mittelälterlichen Ursprungen bis zum Heiligenkult des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*; *Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by F. J. Felten, Mainzer Vorträge, 9 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2004), pp. 115–30 (p. 128); S. Weichlein, 'Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 219–34 (pp. 219–26).

[9] 'Aber Bonifatius ist nicht nur Apostel der Deutschen. Er ist ein Europäer. [...] [Bonifatius] war nicht nur Begründer und Gestalter eines Gefüges neuer Bistümer, er erweckte neben seiner kirchlichen Arbeit durch seine Reise nach Frankreich und Italien das Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit in den Völkern Westeuropas': quoted in Weichlein, 'Bonifatius', p. 234.

road towards Western unity and universality'.[10] One highly popular publication of the preceding year had been an illustrated guide to the Bonifatiusweg, 'the Boniface Route', a historical pilgrimage which traces Boniface's travels from Devon to Salzburg, taking in Paris, the Netherlands, the Rhineland, central Germany, and Bavaria en route.[11] The subtitle of the book, *Die Wurzeln Europas Entdecken* — 'Discover the Roots of Europe' — and the emotive evocation of Crediton, Boniface's semi-legendary birthplace, as 'the Bethlehem of Europe' hint at Boniface's potential role as a symbol of European unity, but the Europe of the Bonifatiusweg remains implicitly Western. This is not to say that Boniface's cult is in danger of neglect: far from it. Continental publications on Boniface, both popular and academic, have only increased in number in the last two decades, and the jubilee of 2004 saw a re-energizing of his public reputation and veneration.

## Boniface as a Historical Figure

Aside from his role as a national and Continental symbol and figure of Catholic veneration, Boniface's significance in the history of early medieval Christianity is assured and celebrated among Dutch-, German-, and English-speaking academics. It is no coincidence that both Richard Fletcher's hefty and compelling *The Conversion of Europe* and Lutz E. von Padberg's recent *Christianisierung im Mittelalter* feature on their respective covers the Fulda Sacramentary's image of Boniface's martyrdom at Dokkum during his final, ill-fated missionary expedition.[12] It is, however, telling that such an image should determine the modern popular view of Boniface, when most historians would now emphasize that Boniface was not principally venerated as a missionary during the early medieval period, but was instead praised after his death as a reformer, monastic founder, and exemplary monk.[13]

---

[10] 'Das Werk des heiligen Bonifatius ist zu einem wichtigen Meilenstein auf dem Weg zu einer abendländischen Einheit und Universalität geworden': H. J. Algermissen, preface to *Verspielen wir das Erbe des hl. Bonifatius? Theologische Betrachtungen aus Anlass seines 1250: Todestages*, ed. by A. Odenthal and others (Frankfurt a.M.: Knecht, 2005), pp. 7–8 (p. 7).

[11] C. A. Brandner and others, *Der Bonifatiusweg: Die Wurzeln Europas Entdecken* (Fulda: Parzeller, 2004).

[12] R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*: *From Paganism to Christianity, AD 371–1386* (London: Fontana, 1997); L. E. von Padberg, *Christianisierung im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2006).

[13] Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 92; P. Kehl, 'Entstehung und Verbreitung des Bonifatiuskultes', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 127–50 (p. 132).

Fig. 1. Statue of Boniface at Fritzlar.

Among English scholars there have also been important questions raised as to how far the wealth of sources relating to Boniface's mission, not least the hagiographical tradition that arose after his death, has exaggerated his role in the Christianization of Germania. Ian Wood has been a prominent voice in this respect,[14] while Timothy Reuter argued that Boniface expended most of his efforts not among the pagans of Frisia or Germania, but among the corrupt and lax clerics of Francia and Bavaria.[15] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, meanwhile, believed that Boniface saw himself as a failure whose 'rash' foundation of bishoprics east of the Rhine was the one flawed accomplishment of his missionary career.[16] Even Richard Fletcher, who staunchly believed that Boniface's first and deepest calling was to be a missionary among the pagans, stated that after four decades of frustrated church reform, with the Saxon heathens always just beyond reach, Boniface was 'oppressed by a sense of failure' by the end of his life.[17]

Boniface, then, has a double identity. There is the popular Boniface of the imagination: the preacher and converter, successor to St Paul, scourge of pagans, whose statue today stands triumphant, axe in hand, upon a shattered oak before the Bonifatian church at Fritzlar (see Fig. 1). Then there is the Boniface of modern scholarship: reformer, monk, and frustrated missionary, in order of declining importance. These identities are not at all contradictory, and in their variety they merely reflect the extraordinary historical legacy of Boniface's long and active life. With hindsight it is easy to dismiss Boniface's missionary career as a failure, especially when the latest surviving letter of his authorship, written a year or two before his death in 754, describes in such vivid terms the pathetic state of his missionaries on the pagan borderlands:[18] 'a pathetic swansong for a hero', as Wallace-Hadrill put it.[19] Yet this letter, as we shall see later on, was not all that Boniface had to show for thirty years of mission, and it gives us no reason to suppose that he saw himself as a failure. On the contrary, it pertains to a specific

---

[14] See especially his comments in I. Wood, 'An Absence of Saints? The Evidence for the Christianisation of Saxony', in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. by P. Godman, J. Jarnut, and P. Johanek (Berlin: Akademie, 2002), pp. 335–52 (pp. 340–45).

[15] T. Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. by T. Reuter (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980), pp. 71–94 (pp. 79–81).

[16] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 153–61.

[17] Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 212–13.

[18] Tangl, ep. 93, pp. 212–14.

[19] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 161.

part of his territory that he might have abandoned years before, had he chosen to,[20] and, though he was frustrated by the past and fearful of the future, the language of the letter shows Boniface at his most passionate, determined, and stubborn. These are hardly the characteristics of a self-professed 'failure'.

My own interests in this study lie principally in Boniface's missionary activities among the pagans of Hessia and the Saxon borderlands, and I intend to add depth and colour to this aspect of his life through a close contextual examination of his mission in this region. Only through such a focused study can we appreciate the true scale of his accomplishments as a missionary, which, when we consider the circumstances in which he worked, were considerable; just as important, only in this way can we improve our understanding of the missionary techniques that he employed in the field. It will therefore be useful to take a closer look at the present state of Bonifatian studies in general.

## A Review of Bonifatian Scholarship

Boniface and his career have been the subject of scholarly study since the mid-eighteenth century, and by the celebrations of 1954 this scholarship had already amounted to several hundred books and articles, almost entirely in German. For a useful summary of bibliographies of Bonifatian scholarship prior to 1954 I refer the reader to the article of C. Weber published in the *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* of that year,[21] and to the bibliography of J. Gottschalk, which lists no fewer than eighty academic studies devoted to Boniface that were published between 1923 and 1950.[22] The most recent literature has been discussed by Rudolf Schieffer.[23] In this brief review I shall restrict myself to the major works published in or after 1954, especially those of more recent years, beginning with the German-language literature.

The most comprehensive study of Boniface in any language remains Theodore Shieffer's 1954 *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas*, in which the author places the career of Boniface within its broad Continental

---

[20] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 387–96.

[21] C. Weber, 'Bonifatius-Bibliographie', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 30 (1954), 86–87.

[22] J. Gottschalk, 'Die Bonifatius Literatur von 1923 bis 1950', *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige*, 62 (1950), 237–46.

[23] R. Schieffer, 'Neue Bonifatius-Literatur', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 63 (2007), 111–23.

context.[24] Schieffer's many insights, with his traditionalist emphasis on political and ecclesiastical history, has ensured his book's definitive status for the last sixty years, and continues to do so. Over the decades since 1954, scholarly interest has shifted slightly from the figure of the saint to the missionary community which he helped nurture, two important products of this shift being Lutz E. von Padberg's *Heilige und Familie* and Stefan Schipperges's *Bonifatius ac socii eius*.[25] At 119 pages, Padberg's recent *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* is an accessible biography of Boniface's life and work aimed at a broader audience.[26] Michael Glatthaar's scholarly *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg* is a 2003 study devoted to Boniface's understanding and use of the term *sacrilegium*,[27] while Heinrich Wagner in his *Bonifatiusstudien* of 2004 examines and analyses the often problematic sources relating to Boniface's mission.[28] Aimed at the interface between academic and popular audiences is Hubertus Lutterbach's creative reconstruction of Boniface's career via his letters, in which he intersperses authentic historical sources with imagined texts.[29]

The bulk of Bonifatian scholarship is in the form of essays. Particularly valuable is the large volume of articles entitled *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag*, published in 1954 as part of the 1200th anniversary celebrations in Fulda,[30] the thirty-one articles of which cover topics from Boniface's missionary theology to his sacramentary and manuscripts, from his relationship with the Frankish church and rulers to his reformation of the

---

[24] Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*.

[25] L. E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, 2nd edn, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte, 83 (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997); S. Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte, 79 (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1996).

[26] L. E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich: Beck, 2003).

[27] M. Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte, 17 (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2004).

[28] H. Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg, 60 (Würzburg: Schöningh, 2003).

[29] H. Lutterbach, *Bonifatius, mit Axt und Evangelium: Eine Biographie in Briefen* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2004).

[30] *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag*, ed. by C. Raabe and others (Fulda: Parzeller, 1954).

Bavarian church, as well as many aspects of his posthumous cult. These essays are in many cases still indispensible to modern scholars. A similar volume, somewhat smaller in scope and with a strong slant towards Boniface's legacy as a medieval and modern political saint, was published as part of the commemorations of 2004.[31] A major international Mainz conference on Boniface held in the same year produced two collections of essays: the first, *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*,[32] takes a slightly broader view of processes of medieval Christianization; the second, larger collection, *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken*, includes twenty-two papers in German, English, and French, and was published in 2007.[33] The 2005 volume of the journal *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* contained seven articles dedicated to Boniface.[34] Also in 2005 came a volume dedicated to Boniface's activities and posthumous veneration in Mainz,[35] and a collection of theological and pastoral essays.[36]

These are only the most important and most recent studies from a vast German-language literature surrounding Boniface, and here I have focused on complete monographs and volumes of essays. Anglophone scholarship can offer no such tradition of Bonifatian study, although a number of recent publications are helping supplement the limited venerable scholarship. Predating Schieffer's 1954 work is Wilhelm Levison's 1946 *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, in which Boniface figures prominently.[37] To mark the twelfth centenary of Boniface's martyrdom, G. W. Greenaway collected three short but useful biographical studies of the saint in one slim volume.[38] In 1980 the Paternoster Press in Exeter published two companion works, including a volume of scholarly papers edited by Timothy Reuter under the title *The Greatest Englishman* and a

---

[31] *Bonifatius*, ed. by M. Imhof and G. K. Stasch.

[32] *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Felten.

[33] *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken: die Gestaltung des christlichen Europa im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by F. J. Felten, J. Jarnut, and L. E. von Padberg, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 121 (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 2007).

[34] *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 57 (2005).

[35] *Bonifatius in Mainz*, ed. by B. Nichtweiß (Mainz: Publikationen Bistum Mainz, 2005).

[36] *Verspielen wir das Erbe des Heiligen Bonifatius?*, ed. by A. Odenthal and others.

[37] W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946).

[38] G. W. Greenaway, *Saint Boniface: Three Biographical Studies for the Twelfth Centenary Festival* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955).

popular biography by John Cyril Sladden.[39] The 2007 volume, *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken*, includes five English-language essays; only one is concerned with Boniface's insular background.[40] Although few in number, these insular studies have helped maintain active scholarly interest in Boniface's West Saxon origins, providing a complementary perspective to the German tradition, which is overwhelmingly concerned with Boniface's Continental career. James Palmer has also recently produced an important historiographical study of the Anglo-Saxon missions to the Continent and their legacy, which unfortunately appeared too late for my own study to benefit from it.[41]

Along with a rich tradition of secondary literature, the primary sources directly or indirectly related to Boniface and his mission have been largely published in critical editions and in part translated into German, Dutch, or English. Most crucial for our knowledge and understanding of Boniface's career are the letters written by him and others connected to the mission. In 1916 the MGH published Tangl's now-standard edition of the letters of Boniface and Lul,[42] which I have used throughout this work and which form the basis for the published German and English translations I have cited.[43] The MGH has also published the various vitae of Boniface and his followers,[44] while the eighth-century charters of Fulda and Bad Hersfeld, the monasteries founded by Boniface and his disciple Lul respectively, are likewise available in critical editions.[45] Apart from his letters, the

---

[39] *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter; J. C. Sladden, *Boniface of Devon: Apostle of Germany* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980).

[40] B. Yorke, 'The Insular Background to Boniface's Continental Career', in *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken*, ed. by Felten, Jarnut, and Padberg, pp. 23–38.

[41] J. T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

[42] The origin, preservation, and transmission of the letters arranged by Tangl in his edition, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lul*, have already been discussed above, in Chapter 1, pp. 10–16.

[43] *Die Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, ed. and trans. by R. Rau, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, 4b (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968); *Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton.

[44] The collected vitae of Boniface are edited by W. Levison in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Mogutini*, MGH SS rer. Germ., 57 (1905). Several of the vitae have been translated into English by C. H. Talbot in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*. For individual references to Boniface's vitae and to those of his circle, see Chapter 1, pp. 10–16, above.

[45] *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, ed. by E. E. Stengel, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 10.1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1958) (henceforth *UBF*);

surviving writings of Boniface include a collection of *enigmata*,[46] a grammar,[47] and fifteen sermons whose attribution to Boniface is disputed.[48]

There are few aspects of Boniface, his career, and his world that have not been extensively studied. One of these, and I believe a crucial one, is how his mission was carried out at the regional level. The surviving historical sources do not make such a study simple; the fragmentary correspondence from the mission offers limited insight into the process of evangelization in any given geographical area of Boniface's mission, while the hagiographical texts, where they have anything useful to say, must be interpreted with great care. Research into northern Hesse's early ecclesiastical landscape, notably by Wilhelm Classen and Michael Gockel,[49] has identified a network of church foundations that are almost certainly Bonifatian in date, but the implications of this discovery have yet to be incorporated into mainstream Bonifatian studies: to do so is a fundamental aim of this study.

Similarly, although both historians and archaeologists are aware of Boniface's foundation of a bishopric at the major Frankish hillfort of Büraburg in central

---

*Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld*, ed. by H. Weirich, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 19. 1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1936) (henceforth *UBH*).

[46] The *enigmata* of Boniface have been edited as part of both the MGH and Corpus Christianorum. Boniface of Mainz, *Bonifatii carmina*, in *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini, I*, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH, Poetae Latini medii aevi, 1, (1881), pp. 3–23; Boniface of Mainz, *Ænigmata Bonifatii*, ed. by F. Glorie, in CCSL, 133 (1968), pp. 273–343.

[47] Boniface of Mainz, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, ed. by G. J. Gebauer and B. Löfstedt, in CCSL, 133B (1980). See M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 3 vols (Munich: Beck, 1911–31), I, 149–51.

[48] These sermons were first edited by Martène-Durand in 1733 and reprinted by J. P. Migne in 1850, but there is no more recent critical edition. I will address the question of their authenticity in Chapter 7, pp. 370–74, below; because of the uncertainty of authorship, in my bibliography I have listed them under Anonymous. Anon., *Sermones*, in *Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum historicorum, dogmatiorum, moralium, amplissima collectio*, ed. by E. Martène and U. Durand, 9 vols (Paris: 1724–33), IX, 186–218; Anon., *Sermones*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus [...] Series Latina*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris: Migne, 1844–64) (henceforth PL), LXXXIX (1850), cols 843–72. They have been translated into German and Dutch: Boniface of Mainz, *Sämtliche Schriften des Heiligen Bonifacius*, ed. and trans. by P. H. Külb (Regensburg: Manz, 1859); Anon., *Het Leven als Leerschool: Preken van Bonifatius*, ed. and trans. by A. Jelsma (Laren: Esplanade, 2003).

[49] W. Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation Althessens im Mittelalter*, Schriften des Instituts für geschichtliche Landeskunde von Hessen und Nassau, 8 (Marburg: Elwert, 1929); M. Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter: Festschrift zur 1250-Jahrfeier*, ed. by W. Schlesinger (Fritzlar: Magistrat der Stadt Fritzlar, 1974), pp. 89–120.

Hessia, the perspective of the historian tends to be expansive in time and space, regarding Büraburg as a short-lived blip in a much larger episcopal landscape,[50] while the eyes of the archaeologist remain fixed on the details of the earth, with only an occasional glimpse towards the historical horizon.[51] Until archaeologists and historians combine their expertise to see the bigger picture in all its subtlety and complexity, the precise relationship of Boniface's mission to the developing political and military context of the Hessian-Saxon borderlands will remain elusive. With this book I intend to help bridge this interdisciplinary gap by building on the two traditions of Bonifatian scholarship and early medieval Hessian archaeology.

## *Archaeology*

### Seventh- and Eighth-Century Hessia

The central German state of Hesse has a rich tradition of archaeological research, particularly into the early medieval period. A defining feature of the state is a broad division between north and south. The south, centred on the densely populated middle Rhine and lower Main, was part of the Roman Empire between the first and fifth centuries, while northern Hesse lay beyond the *limes*. This contrast continued into the Merovingian period from the mid-fifth century, when the old Roman territories fell under direct Frankish control. Only by the late seventh century did the Franks extend their rule into what is now northern Hesse, a process that we shall explore fully in Chapter 4 below; as discussed in Chapter 1,[52] this region, early medieval Hessia, will be the focus of our attention throughout the book.

---

[50] Typical are Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 89–90, and Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 80, both of whom acknowledged the status of Büraburg as a major Frankish fortification without discussing its significance for Boniface's Hessian mission.

[51] Two archaeologists who have discussed the archaeological evidence in relation to the Bonifatian mission, though in a limited fashion, are Norbert Wand and David Parsons: N. Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar: Burg, 'Oppidum', Bischofsitz in karolingischer Zeit*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 4 (Marburg: Elwert, 1974), pp. 34–81; D. Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments of the Anglo-Saxon Mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal*, 140 (1983), 280–321; D. Parsons, 'Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence', *Early Medieval Europe*, 8 (1999), 31–67.

[52] Chapter 1, pp. 6–10, above.

The academic study of Hessia's early medieval archaeology has been led since 1927 by scholars at or connected to the Department of Prehistory and Early History at the Philipps-Universität in Marburg. The two principal historical and archaeological journals of Hesse, *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* and *Fundberichte aus Hessen*, began publication in 1951 and 1961 respectively, while the dedicated study of Frankish-period Hessia was initiated by Walter Schlesinger, the head historian of the Hessian regional government,[53] and its research agenda formulated at an interdisciplinary conference held in Frankfurt from 2 to 4 December 1965 under the title 'The Franks in the Region East of the Middle Rhein'.[54] In the wake of this conference, which was attended by historians, archaeologists, linguists, and geographers from Marburg as well as from Mainz, Munich, Cologne, Hannover, Bonn, and elsewhere, followed more than a decade of coordinated and well-funded excavations and research projects that revolutionized early medievalists' understanding of the expansion of Frankish control east of the Middle Rhine from the sixth to the tenth century.[55] Although the rather haphazard publication of the researchers' findings lasted into the 80s and 90s and in some cases remains incomplete, the present generation of Hessian archaeologists has at its disposal a huge volume of intensely analysed material that was unavailable thirty years ago.

I will aim to relate the findings from this period of intensive research in Chapter 4, below, and here briefly mention the landmark publications it produced. The first was Schlesinger's 1975 edited volume *Althessen im Frankenreich*, which contains contributions by the major figures of early medieval studies in Hessia,[56] supplemented by Rolf Gensen's general survey *Althessens Frühzeit* in

---

[53] Schlesinger was head of the Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliche Landeskunde, the government body charged with the preservation and study of Hesse's cultural and historical heritage.

[54] For a full account of this conference and the resolutions of its contributors, see W. Schlesinger, 'Die Franken im Gebiet Östlich des Rheins: Skizze eines Forschungsprogramms', *HJL*, 15 (1965), 1–22.

[55] For a review of this period of intensive interdisciplinary research and its fruits, see M. Gockel, 'Die Franken in Althessen: Interdisziplinäre Ansätze frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsforschung', in *HJL*, 50 (2000), 57–76, and the following article by H. W. Böhme, 'Franken in Althessen — aus archäologische Sicht', *HJL*, 50 (2000), 77–92. Both Gockel and Böhme observe that the achievements of Schlesinger and his fellow researchers, though considerable in hindsight, ultimately fell short of expectations due to various factors, primarily financial and organizational obstacles.

[56] *Althessen im Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger.

1979.[57] The ambitious research project of the *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, the objective of which was to produce a series of large-scale, comprehensively annotated maps covering every period and aspect of Hessian history from climatology to prehistoric mound burials and the modern industrial land-scape, was conceived before World War II and finally completed in 1984.[58] It is an invaluable resource for researchers of all periods including early medievalists, and thanks to the foresight of the Hessian regional government is fully available online.[59] Also in 1984, following a major exhibition in Frankfurt, there appeared the lavishly illustrated *Hessen im Mittelalter*, edited by Helmut Roth and Egon Wamers.[60] The series Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland published two volumes in 1986 which provide well-illustrated surveys of the archaeological evidence of Hessia.[61] In 1989 Klaus Sippel's study of the early medieval burial evidence of northern Hesse was published.[62] The central Hessian hillfort of Büraburg has been extensively excavated and published,[63] as have the hillforts of Christenberg[64] and Höfe bei

---

[57] R. Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit: Frühgeschichtliche Fundstätten und Funde in Nordhessen*, Führer zur hessischen Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 1 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1979).

[58] *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel. For an account of its inception and early development, see F. Uhlhorn, 'Der geschichtliche Atlas von Hessen: Planung und Gestaltung', *HJL*, 23 (1973), 62–80.

[59] The *Geschichtlicher Atlas* can be accessed on the LAGIS website at <http://cgi-host.uni-marburg.de/~hlgl/atlas/inhalt.cgi?page=0> [accessed 31 July 2009].

[60] *Hessen im Mittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst*, ed. by H. Roth and E. Wamers (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1984).

[61] *Der Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, ed. by F.-R. Herrmann, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 8 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1986); *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by F.-R. Herrmann, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 7 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1986).

[62] K. Sippel, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde in Nordhessen*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 7 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1989).

[63] Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar*; N. Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken in der merowingisch-karolingischen Zeit', in *Althessen im Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 173–210.

[64] R. Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit', in *Althessen im Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 121–72; R. Gensen, 'Früh-mittelalterliche Burgen und Siedlungen in Nordhessen', in *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland*, 4 vols (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, 1975), I, 313–34; R. Gensen, *Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 77 (Wiesbaden:

Dreihausen,[65] and the early medieval settlement sites of Geismar[66] and Holz-heim.[67]

Very little of the early medieval archaeology of Hessia is known to scholars outside Germany. A 1976 English-language article of Schlesinger helped adver-tise the results of his excavation projects to an international audience,[68] but the anglophone response has been limited to a pair of articles published in 1983 and 1999 by David Parsons in which he related the major Hessian early medieval fortifications and church sites to the Bonifatian mission.[69] In Chapter 4 of this book I will propose a new model for understanding the process of Frankish expansion into Hessia between *c.* 600 and 721, the year of Boniface's arrival.

I will attempt to advance the current state of knowledge further in two other respects. First, as already mentioned, I shall relate the archaeological evidence

Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1989); R. Gensen, 'Ein Keramikkomplex mit dem Schlussdatum 753 von Christenberg, Gde. Münchhausen am Christenberg, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf', in *Archäologische Beiträge zur Geschichte Westfalens (Festschrift K. Günther)*, ed. by D. Bérenger, Internationale Archäologie, Studia Honoria, 2 (Rahden: Leidorf, 1997), pp. 219–28.

[65] R. Gensen, *Die Höfe bei Dreihausen*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 121 (Wies-baden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1995); E. Treude, 'Die Höfe bei Dreihausen', *FH*, 39/40 (1999/2000), 1–72.

[66] R. Gensen, *Die chattische Großsiedlung von Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäo-logische Denkmäler in Hessen, 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1978); R. Heiner, *Studien an Siedlungskeramik*: *Ausgewählte Merkmale und Fundkomplexe der Latène- und römischen Kaiserzeit aus der Siedlung Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 12.1 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1994); W. Best, *Funde der Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit aus der frühgeschichtlichen Siedlung Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 12. 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1990); A. Thiedmann, *Die Siedlung von Geismar bei Fritzlar: Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in der vor- und frühgeschicht-lichen Siedlung im Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 2001).

[67] J. H. Schotten, N. Wand, and U. Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen und früh-bis spätmittelalterlichen Siedlungsbereichen der Dorfwüstung Holzheim bei Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *FH*, 17/18 (1977/78), 213–60; *Holzheim bei Fritzlar: Archäologie eines mittelalter-lichen Dorfes*, ed. by N. Wand, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 6 (Rahden: Leidorf, 2002).

[68] W. Schlesinger, 'Early Medieval Fortifications in Hesse: A General Historical Report', *World Archaeology*, 7 (1976), 243–60.

[69] Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments of the Anglo-Saxon Mission'; Parsons, 'Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries'.

of Hessia more closely to the Bonifatian mission than has yet been attempted. Second, I will draw on anglophone discussions of the nature of early medieval burial remains in order to take a more nuanced view of the Hessian evidence. Migrationist models remain dominant in German-language archaeology as a whole, and material culture tends to be interpreted according to its functional, rather than symbolic, aspects.[70] The question of continuity from the Roman to the early medieval period in Hessia, for example, has always been discussed almost entirely in terms of mass population movement rather than in terms of the dynamic nature of cultural identity and the settled landscape,[71] and the development of the region from the fifth to the ninth centuries is principally understood in terms of its gradual political, ecclesiastical and economic integration into the Frankish realm.[72] Although Hessian archaeologists are now beginning to adopt more nuanced interpretations of archaeological data, in particular burial evidence,[73] there is still a lack of explicit theoretical discussion. I therefore intend to contribute to the existing literature by approaching the archaeological data of Hessia with insights gained from recent theoretical discussion within anglophone archaeology, in particular with regard to landscape studies.

[70] Migration models have retained a strong hold in German archaeology until relatively recently, and represents the great divide between the German and anglophone archaeological traditions of the last forty years. See H. Härke, 'Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?', *Current Anthropology*, 3 (1998), 19–45 (especially pp. 20–21); for a broader discussion, H. Härke, 'All Quiet on the Western Front? Paradigms, Methods and Approaches in West German Archaeology', in *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. by I. Hodder (London, 1991), pp. 187–222. Here I use the distinction between functional and symbolic aspects of material culture as discussed by I. Hodder, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 124–25.

[71] For further discussion, Chapter 4, pp. 129–32, below.

[72] As acknowledged by Gockel, 'Die Franken in Althessen', p. 74, the best general discussion of the 'Frankization' of northern Hesse remains the 1975 article by F. Schwind, 'Die Franken in Hessen', in *Althessen im Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 211–80.

[73] See especially Böhme's analysis of burial ritual in the borderlands between Hessia and the territory of the Borthari (see Chapter 4, pp. 143–56, below), in which he puts forward a model of cultural influence in preference to older models which viewed burial rituals as direct ethnic signifiers. H. W. Böhme, 'Franken oder Sachsen? Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte in Westfalen vom 4.-7. Jahrhundert', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 12 (1999), 43–73 (pp. 68–71).

## Archaeology and Landscape Studies

*Landscape* is a term that has been used with countless meanings, not always well defined, across the social sciences.[74] Its application in Anglo-Saxon archaeology covers areas as diverse as economic exploitation and trade,[75] settlement morphology[76] and the arrangement of political, cultural, and ecclesiastical boundaries.[77]

[74] For fuller discussions, see M. Johnson, *Ideas of Landscape* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 2–4; E. Hirsch, 'Landscape: Between Place and Space', in *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, ed. by E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 1–30.

[75] R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement: Archaeology and the Beginnings of English Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), especially pp. 80–112; M. Brisbane, 'Hamwic (Southampton): An 8th-Century Port and Production Centre', in *The Rebirth of Towns in the West AD 700–1050*, ed. by R. Hodges and B. Hobbley, CBA Research Report, 68 (London: CBA, 1988), pp. 101–08; *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia*, ed. by M. Anderton (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1999); *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive Sites', c. 650–850*, ed. by T. Pestell and K. Ulmschneider (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003); J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade in Middle Saxon England*, BAR British Series, 376 (Oxford: BAR, 2004); J. Maddicott, 'London and Droitwich, *c.* 650–750: Trade, Industry and the Rise of Mercia', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34, (2005), 7–58.

[76] For general studies (not of individual settlements), see C. R. Radford, 'The Saxon House: A Review and Some Parallels', *Medieval Archaeology*, 1 (1957), 27–38; P. Rahtz, 'Buildings and Rural Settlement', in *Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by D. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 49–98; S. James, A. Marshall, and M. Millett, 'An Early Medieval Building Tradition', *Archaeological Journal*, 141 (1984), 182–215; D. Powlesland, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Settlements: Structures, Form and Layout', in *The Anglo-Saxons: From the Migration Period to the Eighth Century*, ed. by J. Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp. 101–24; H. Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in North-Western Europe, 400–900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); H. Hamerow, 'The Archaeology of Early Anglo-Saxon Settlements: Past, Present and Future', in *Landscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by N. Christie (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 301–16.

[77] The literature in this area in particular is vast. For the major works, see F. M. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897); H. M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905); F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), especially, pp. 277–318; E. John, *Land Tenure in Early England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1960); H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1964); E. Klingelhöfer, *Manor, Vill and Hundred: The Development of Rural Institutions in Early Medieval Hampshire*, Studies and Texts, 112 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992); D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon*

Tim Pestell's recent study of the monastic landscape of East Anglia between 650 and 1200, which draws upon historical and archaeological sources in order to describe and explain the changing patterns of monastic foundation over time, also takes account of the ways in which the cultural perception of landscape may have affected its use.[78] Such an interest in the 'phenomenology of landscape', widespread among British prehistorians for over twenty-five years, has only recently begun to emerge in medieval studies. The present book, concerned as it is with the sacred significance of the Hessian landscape during the mission of St Boniface, is related to this movement.

The archaeological term *phenomenology* refers to a theoretical approach inspired by the philosophical models of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, whose concerns lay with understanding the structures of consciousness revealed through subjective experience.[79] Their models have been adapted to suit the particular interests of archaeologists in the material world and its role in constituting social and individual identity. Brück defines phenomenology in archaeology thus:

> Phenomenology aims to describe the character of human experience, specifically the ways in which we apprehend the material world through directed intervention in our surroundings. [...] It is argued that embodied engagement with the material world is constitutive of existence.[80]

Landscape, in other words, should not be treated as a two-dimensional canvas for the mapping of economic resources and nodes or boundaries of power, for such

---

*England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1998); D. Hooke, *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon Charter-Bounds*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 2 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990); T. Saunders, 'Class, Space and "Feudal" Identities in Early Medieval England', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by W. O. Frazer and A. Tyrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 209–32.

[78] T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c. 650–1200* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), pp. 8–9, 219–22.

[79] The founding work of modern phenomenology, originally published in 1913, is E. Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Erstes Buch; Allgemeine Einführungen in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. by K. Schuhmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977). Heidegger's most influential work was M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1927). For introductory discussions of the philosophical tradition of phenomenology, see R. Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); D. Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000); *Encyclopaedia of Phenomenology*, ed. by L. Embree (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997).

[80] J. Brück, 'Experiencing the Past? The Development of a Phenomenological Archaeology in British Prehistory', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 12 (2005), 45–72 (p. 46).

an approach serves to objectify and commodify what should be more accurately seen as an integral part of the social world. People ascribe to places within the landscape meaning and significance that cannot be quantified by traditional archaeological means, and movement and existence within the landscape is a necessarily three-dimensional, sensuous experience for the individual agent. Hence, if archaeologists are to incorporate these concerns into their interpretations of the past, they must learn how to approach the phenomenology of the landscape.[81]

The major weakness of phenomenological approaches to landscape, as has frequently been commented upon, is their vulnerability to circular reasoning and deductive tyranny: since the archaeologist must himself or herself define the standard for a 'significant' landscape element, how are we to determine that the resulting patterns bear any relation to the experiences of prehistoric peoples, and not merely to those of the investigating archaeologist?[82] The very plasticity of the

[81] See D. Miller and C. Tilley, 'Ideology, Power and Prehistory: An Introduction', in *Ideology, Power and Prehistory: New Directions in Archaeology*, ed. by D. Miller and C. Tilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–15. Tilley later developed his ideas in C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), especially pp. 7–34; more recently, C. Tilley, *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), especially pp. 2–19; C. Tilley, 'Round Barrows and Dykes as Landscape Metaphors', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 14 (2004), 185–203. A crucial influence on Tilley's approach, and on phenomenological studies of landscape in general, is the work of geographer Denis Cosgrove; see in particular D. E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and the Symbolic Landscape* (London: Helm, 1984), especially pp. 13–31. Following a different route, John Barrett has adapted the structuration theory of sociologist Anthony Giddens into a model of 'fields of discourse', by which he has sought to explain shifting power relations in the monumental landscape of the prehistoric period. J. Barrett, 'The Monumentality of Death: The Character of Early Bronze Age Mortuary Mounds in Southern Britain', *World Archaeology*, 22 (1990), 179–89; J. Barrett, 'Agency, the Duality of Structure and the Problem of the Archaeological Record', in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. by I. Hodder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 140–64.

[82] A case in point is Tilley's study of prehistoric monuments on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall. One of the 'significant' landscape features he identifies is the relationship of stone cairns to the natural rocky outcrops known as *tors*. On a map he plots fifteen of these cairns which occur next to or on top of tors, but these represent less than 5 per cent of the more than 350 cairns on Bodmin Moor. Since he does not plot the locations of the remaining 95 per cent, the statistical significance of his observation is open to question. C. Tilley, 'The Powers of Rocks: Topography and Monument Construction on Bodmin Moor', *World Archaeology*, 28 (1996), 161–76 (p. 171, fig. 3). Andrew Fleming has recently given a sharp critique of phenomenological studies of prehistoric landscapes, commenting especially on Tilley's methodology. See A. Fleming, 'Post-

physical landscape as an arena of human significance and meaning makes it unlikely that past perceptions of it can be recovered with any great precision, especially where nothing but the landscape and certain types of durable monument remain. Even if 'patterns of significance' within the monumental landscape can be empirically identified, there remains the problem of deducing the meanings they once held.

As a historian of anthropological bent, I remain doubtful that phenomenology alone can reveal any but the most general elements of significance, and perhaps nothing at all of meaning, that existed within the landscapes of periods without written sources.[83] Even where written sources exist, the insights they offer into matters of landscape perception will likely be sparse, ambiguous, and relevant only to a limited number of like-thinking past individuals. The letters of Boniface and Lul, however, uniquely for this period, allow us to gain some insight into the self-perception and self-portrayal of a tightly defined group of Christian missionaries, and these writings, together with the evidence of place-names, can potentially form a valid basis for exploring the significance and meanings of the landscape in which they found themselves. The main challenge will be to perform phenomenological analysis within a sufficiently critical methodological framework.

Some years ago Nick Corcos predicted that the next wave of innovative phenomenological landscape studies would be undertaken by medievalists rather than prehistorians, and he has been proved correct.[84] Several recent works have

---

processual Landscape Archaeology: A Critique', in *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 16 (2006), 267–80 (pp. 273–75). See also Brück, 'Experiencing the Past?'; J. Brück, 'In the Footsteps of the Ancestors: A Review of Tilley's *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 15 (1998), 23–36; C. Jones, 'Interpreting the Perceptions of Past People', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 15 (1998), 7–22; S. Tarlow, 'Emotion in Archaeology', *Current Anthropology*, 41 (2000), 713–46; J. Barrett, comment on Tilley's 'Round Barrows and Dykes', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 14 (2004), 199; A. Fleming, 'Phenomenology and the Megaliths of Wales: A Dreaming Too Far?', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 18 (1999), 119–25; R. Muir, 'Conceptualising Landscape', *Landscapes*, 1 (2000), 4–21.

[83] Richard Bradley, in his study on the use of natural places as ritual sites in pre-Christian Europe, made an insightful attempt to overcome this problem through the extensive use of pre-modern ethnographic analogies. R. Bradley, *An Archaeology of Natural Places* (London: Routledge, 2000). See also R. Bradley, 'Mental and Material Landscapes in Prehistoric Britain', in *Landscape: The Richest Historical Record*, ed. by D. Hooke, Society for Landscape Studies Supplementary Series, 1 (Amesbury: Society for Landscape Studies, 2000), pp. 1–11.

[84] N. Corcos, 'Churches as Pre-historic Ritual Monuments: A Review and Phenomenological Perspective from Somerset', *Assemblage*, 6 (2001) <http://www.assemblage.group.shef.ac.uk

successfully incorporated aspects of phenomenology, in particular with relation to Christian symbolism, sacrality, and cosmology, into more traditional studies of the medieval landscape. First, Karen Altenberg's 2003 *Experiencing Landscapes*, a comparative study of three economically marginal regions in late medieval England and Sweden, exemplifies the value of firmly rooted interdisciplinary landscape research.[85] The main achievement of her study has been to demonstrate that social relations and cultural perceptions, not merely economic, political, or technological concerns, were important factors in determining how medieval landscapes were experienced and used. Second, Lucia Nixon, in her 2006 study of the sacred landscape of Sphakia, Crete, from AD 1000 to the present day, was able to use the rich data gathered by a wide-ranging survey programme to analyse the factors influencing the positioning of rural churches and icon stands.[86] Using an interdisciplinary approach similar to Altenberg's, she was able to elucidate the complex interaction of cultural symbolism, spatial arrangement (topography), and material practicality behind the evolution of a sacred landscape over the course of a millennium. Third, Sam Turner's 2006 study of early medieval south-west England, Boniface's own country, also places the symbolic aspects of the landscape firmly alongside the economic and political aspects according to a dedicated multidisciplinary methodology.[87] He is thus able to argue that the placing of ecclesiastical sites at the heart of the settled landscape contributed to the generation of a 'Christian landscape' in which the church assumed both physical and spiritual centrality.

A unifying feature of these studies is the attempt to view landscape in the broadest and most inclusive sense possible, giving appropriate weight to its functional and symbolic aspects. Identity is also a common concern; this is implicit in

---

/issue6/Corcos_web.html> [accessed 31 July 2009]. As early as 1987, Ian Hodder, in a discussion of meaning and symbolism within the archaeological and geographical traditions, concluded that 'the contextual binding of social action leads to the embrace of history' ('Converging Traditions: The Search for Symbolic Meanings in Archaeology and Geography', in *Landscape and Culture*, ed. by J. M. Wagstaff (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 134–45 (p. 144)). His own interests, however, remained focused on prehistoric periods.

[85] K. Altenberg, *Experiencing Landscapes: A Study of Space and Identity in Three Marginal Areas of Medieval Britain and Scandinavia*, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology, 31 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Viksell, 2003).

[86] L. Nixon, *Making a Landscape Sacred: Outlying Churches and Icon Stands in Sphakia, Southwestern Crete* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006).

[87] S. Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape: The Countryside in Early Medieval Cornwall, Devon and Wessex* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006).

the titles chosen by Turner and Nixon, for both of whom a central question is how Christian identity was manifested and defined within the landscape. A particular concern of Altenberg is to show how three economically marginal landscapes of late medieval Britain and Scandinavia were perceived differently by insiders, outsiders, laypeople, and religious. She concludes that

> the perception of regional identity is expressed on various levels and often determined by the social construction of memory, i.e. the creation of a real or perceived history, specific to a region, community or even a family. The natural world plays an important part in this process, as landmarks and monuments (or perhaps the absence of these features) serve to form the cosmology of societies lacking a linear concept of history.[88]

According to the phenomenological approach, we achieve an understanding of the world by moving through it, mentally or physically, and by assembling a framework within which we can understand every part in relation to the whole. From quantifiable *space* we create a sense of *place*, and we define each place in any number of ways: by the activities we or others perform in it, or should not perform in it; by ownership; by resources; by symbolism or sacrality; and so on.[89] These aspects of place are frequently, though not always, bound to our social identity, and are often contested. Altenberg writes of the medieval church's attempt to 'Christianize' the sparsely inhabited Cornish moors:

> From a Christian perspective the moors were marginal and the efforts of the church in these areas were missionary, as it tried to tame the wilderness, a mythical inferno from which the community needed protection. Stone crosses and chapels in prominent positions were erected in a mental crusade against the unknown. [...] [This process created] invisible, perceptual boundaries, organising individuals and groups, telling them where to go and where not to go, and more importantly — where they belonged.[90]

The inferno may have been mythical, but it was real enough to the members of the church who erected crosses on the tors of Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor; a phenomenological approach must account for the role of such perceptions and

---

[88] Altenberg, *Experiencing Landscapes*, p. 268.

[89] J. E. Hood, 'Social Relations and the Cultural Landscape', in *Landscape Archaeology: Reading and Interpreting the American Historical Landscape*, ed. by R. Yamin and K. Bescherer Methany (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), pp. 121–46 (p. 122); A. B. Knapp and W. Ashmore, 'Archaeological Landscapes: Constructed, Conceptualised, Ideational', in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by W. Ashmore and A. B. Knapp (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1–30 (pp. 13–16); S. Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 14; Hirsch, 'Landscape'; Hodder, 'Converging Traditions', pp. 140–41.

[90] Altenberg, *Experiencing Landscapes*, pp. 110, 112.

beliefs in the use and control of the landscape. In accordance with the above discussion of individual identity and social discourse, we must also recognize that the relationship between identity and the experienced landscape is reflexive, and may sometimes be consciously manipulated.[91]

Developments in landscape archaeology have been paralleled in anthropology over the last fifteen years. There, increasing attention is being paid to landscape as a 'cultural process' that plays a reflexive role in everyday experience and identity.[92] Especially informative for this study is Arjun Appadurai's model of locality production, which he developed as part of his studies into the effects of globalization on local communities around the world. Appadurai uses the term *locality* to describe the 'structure of feeling' that binds subjects to a particular locale;[93] this is a complex of identity and knowledge, acquired as one grows up within a community, that is 'primarily relational and contextual rather than [...] scalar or spatial'.[94] Localities, Appadurai writes, encompass all aspects of social life, and could potentially assume equal centrality in anthropological studies:

> The large literature on techniques for naming places, for protecting fields, animals and other reproductive spaces and resources, for marking seasonal change and agricultural rhythms, for properly situating new houses and wells, for appropriately demarcating boundaries (both domestic and communal), is substantially a literature documenting the socialization of space and time. [...] More precisely, it is a record of the spatio-temporal production of locality.[95]

Localities are not immutable frameworks of social behaviour and communal perception. They must be continually redefined and reinforced, rituals re-

---

[91] For an illuminating study focusing on the construction of a single monastic community in nineteenth-century Annapolis, see E. Kryder-Reid, 'The Construction of Sanctity: Landscape and Ritual in a Religious Community' in *Landscape Archaeology*, ed. by Yamin and Methany, pp. 228–48.

[92] See Hirsch, 'Landscape', pp. 22–23.

[93] A. Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. by R. Fardon (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 204–25 (p. 207). Tilley uses 'locale' with a similar sense to Appadurai's 'locality' ('The Power of Rocks', p. 161).

[94] Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', p. 204.

[95] Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', p. 205. Two recent studies have used Appadurai's model to examine the local religious shrines and cults in Africa: P. Probst, 'Expansion and Enclosure: Ritual Landscapes and the Politics of Space in Central Malawi', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28 (2002), 179–98; U. Luig, 'Constructing Local Worlds: Spirit Possession in the Gwembe Valley', in *Spirit Possession: Modernity and Power in Africa*, ed. by H. Behrend and U. Luig (Oxford: Currey, 1999), pp. 124–41.

peated, memories refreshed, and new generations constantly created and taught 'correct' customs and traditions. When this process of discourse and reproduction is disrupted by external influences, 'problems that are properly historical arise'.[96]

In eighth-century Hessia, as everywhere else in human history, there was a multiplicity of landscapes comprising countless localities, depending on how we choose to define them. Our sources allow us to study very few of them, but sufficient toponymical evidence survives for us to identify several localities of great importance for pre-Christian religious activity. These were part of the sacred pagan landscape of Hessia on the eve of Boniface's mission. As we shall see in Chapter 7, ascertaining something of the nature of these localities is a demanding, though not hopeless, task for the historian and archaeologist.[97] Sites of cult-based pagan worship were centres of social life and identity, focal points of localities, and their reproduction was drastically disrupted by the advent of Boniface's mission. The Anglo-Saxon missionaries, meanwhile, were determined to found their own localities, physically and symbolically centred on church, monastery, or oratory, and use them to redefine local identities and the pagan past in fundamentally Christian terms. Appadurai's model is useful for conceptualizing the ensuing contestation of sacrality in the landscape:

> All locality-building has a moment of colonization, a moment both historical and chronotypic, where there is a formal recognition that the production of a neighbourhood requires deliberate, risky, even violent action in respect to the soil, the forests, animals and other human beings. A good deal of the violence associated with foundational ritual is a recognition of the force that is required to wrest a locality from previously uncontrolled people and places.[98]

Appadurai's remarks could almost be a literal description of Boniface's felling of the Geismar shrine. From Boniface's point of view, there could be no long-term accommodation of pagan sacrality within a landscape that he was determined to claim for Christ. He and his missionaries inhabited the same physical space as the local pagans but a very different cultural place. Sites of pagan significance had to be identified, activities associated with them disrupted, and all social memory of those activities eradicated or drastically reinterpreted. They were to be re-*placed*, in the literal and phenomenological sense, directly or indirectly, by sites of

---

[96] Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', p. 207.

[97] Chapter 7, pp. 280–349, below.

[98] Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', pp. 208–09.

Christian significance, and in this way their localities were to be utterly trans-
formed. This was a fundamental part of the conversion process, and the part
which perhaps had the greatest immediate impact on the daily lives of ordinary
people.

## *Conversion*

### Defining Christianity and Paganism

One of the overarching narratives of late antique and early medieval history is
that of Christianity's gradual expansion across Europe. This narrative was first
perceived and constructed as such in the ecclesiastical histories of Eusebius and
Bede, both of whom saw the spread of Christianity as the defining feature of the
world in their own times, and it has continued to inform the frames of study of
modern academics.[99] Just as historians have seen the Bonifatian mission as being
closely connected to the expansion of Frankish imperialism east of the Rhine, so
they have viewed it in the context of Christianity's thousand-year expansion
across the face of Europe.[100] Again, our focus in this study will remain firmly at the
regional level, concerned specifically with the Christianization of eighth-century
Hessia, but an understanding of the broader context is crucial.

Implicit in the theme of 'conversion in the early Middle Ages' are questions
regarding the nature of Christianity, paganism, and conversion itself. These
questions are sociological and anthropological as well as historical, and invariably
relate to the broader problem of how social scientists should best categorize and
study religion. Space does not permit an extensive discussion of the important
works of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Robert Bellah, who pioneered the
comparative study of religion based on the broad distinction between its 'world'
and 'traditional' forms, but a few preliminary remarks will be necessary.

---

[99] Recent works which take the expansion of Christianity within Europe as their dominant
historical theme include Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*; Fletcher, *The Conversion of
Europe*; M. O. H. Carver, 'Introduction: Northern Europeans Negotiate their Future', in *The
Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. by M. O. H.
Carver (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), pp. 3–13; Padberg, *Christianisierung im Mittelalter*;
P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison:
University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and
Diversity, AD 200–1000*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[100] This is most eloquently done in Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 234–36, and
Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 418–28.

Weber was an early promoter of the idea that 'world religions' offer a 'rationalized' concept of the world, codified in writing, made firm by means of doctrine, rite, and authority until the core of the concept becomes a Truth that is unassailable, unquestionable, and sacred in itself: for example, the Jewish Torah, the Muslim Koran, or the Christian Bible. This coherence and rationality, argued Weber, is the great strength of world religions, as 'traditional religions', which rarely have a written canon, have no structured body of argument to stand against it.[101] This model was further developed by Robert Bellah,[102] and was applied to the early medieval conversion of the Germanic-speaking peoples to Christianity by James Russell.[103] There is also a strong tradition of phenomenological religious studies which claims its roots in the works of Rudolf Otto and found two of its most influential practitioners in Mircea Eliade and Friedrich Heiler.[104]

The obstacles inherent in applying an overly simplistic model of 'world' versus 'traditional' religions to the early medieval period are made especially clear by Russell's study. In short, Russell argues that the Germanic-speaking peoples of Europe shared a common worldview that incorporated 'traditional' forms of folk religiosity, a 'high level of group solidarity', and a 'rural and homogeneous' social structure.[105] This 'Germanic world-view', Russell claims, was fundamentally incompatible with the urban, Mediterranean worldview of early Christianity. The result was that Christianity, in order to become accepted by the Germanic peoples, was forced to become 'Germanized'.[106]

Reviewers have criticized numerous aspects of Russell's controversial book,[107] but here we shall focus on his problematic sociological conception of early

---

[101] M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. by E. Fischoff (Boston: Beaker, 1956), especially pp. 68–71; see also E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by C. Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[102] R. N. Bellah, 'Religious Evolution', *American Sociological Review*, 29 (1964), 358–74.

[103] J. C. Russell, *The Germanisation of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[104] R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd edn, trans. by J. W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1950); M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. by W. R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959); F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1979).

[105] Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, p. 212.

[106] Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, pp. 211–14.

[107] See, for example, A. Angenendt, review of Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 49 (1998), 156–57; T. F. X. Noble, review of Russell, ibid., 100 (1995), 888–89; A. M. Perron, review of Russell, ibid., 78 (1998), 619–21.

medieval Christianity and paganism. There are two serious flaws in his model. First, the scarcity of direct evidence of pre-Christian religious practices in north-west Europe may tempt one to employ such an overarching sociological model of religion, but the danger of overgeneralization, to which Russell succumbs, is great.[108] The second major weakness of Russell's study is his assumption that the traditional 'pagan Germanic' religion, a hazardous concept in itself,[109] was resistant to change to the extent that the world religion in question, Christianity, was forced to become 'Germanized'.[110] No historian would deny that Christianity, however one might choose to define the term, was affected by its contact with the Germanic-speaking peoples of Europe, but Russell's failure to acknowledge the complex, heterogeneous nature of both early medieval Christianity and paganism means that he has little worthwhile to say concerning the interaction between them.

The flaws of Russell's book help illuminate the dangers of overgeneralizing and oversimplifying matters of early medieval religiosity. 'Christianity' and 'paganism', despite being useful analytical and descriptive labels, must not be regarded as monolithic, mutually antagonistic belief systems in a way that obscures the complexity of their relationship.[111] Indeed, the difficulties that anthropologists have in seeking a universal, cross-cultural definition of 'religion' itself should lead us to question whether a meaningful definition of this kind can even be reached. Heiler's use of 'universal' phenomenological categories to dissect and study any religion in supposed objectivity is also of dubious validity, since it rests upon the highly debatable assumption that 'religion' can be defined as a distinct aspect or collection of aspects of non-Western, non-Christian societies.[112]

---

[108] Russell's thesis depends heavily upon Georges Dumézil's model of a homogeneous pan-Indo-European worldview (see G. Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*, ed. and trans. by E. Haugen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), even though Dumézil himself later abandoned this very model.

[109] See Chapter 7, pp. 280–91, below.

[110] Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, pp. 213–14 and passim.

[111] L. J. R. Milis, 'Introduction: The Pagan Middle Ages — A Contradiction in Terms?', in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by L. J. R. Milis, trans. by T. Guest (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 1–12 (pp. 5–10).

[112] Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen*. For an attempt to use Heiler's classificatory scheme as a tool of analysis, see P. McKenzie, *Hail Orisha! A Phenomenology of a West African Religion in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Religion in Africa, 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1997). For a commentary and cogent critique of McKenzie, see J. L. Cox, 'Missionaries, the Phenomenology of Religion and "Representing" Nineteenth-Century African Religion: A Case Study of Peter McKenzie's "Hail

Given these problems, it is helpful to consider religion as something that is not distinct from (or within) culture in general. The anthropologist Robert Hefner has argued in favour of a broader understanding of identity, politics, and morality, in which religion colours and touches many aspects of social life.[113] Clifford Geertz, meanwhile, defines religion as a system of 'sacred symbols' which serves 'to synthesize a people's ethos [...] and their world view'.[114] Religious belief and ritual, in this sense, become no different in essence from 'non-religious' belief and ritual; boundaries between the two are blurred, and in fact the distinction itself becomes meaningless. This kind of conceptualization allows Albertus Demyttenaere to describe the process of medieval monastic education in completely non-religious terms: '[Monastic education is] cultural propagation, a process by which social and mental structures are developed, changed or enforced, and transmitted in space and time from generation to generation.'[115] Once religion is absorbed into this broader understanding of culture, however, it need not disappear, for religion is a real and powerful influence in the lives of many individuals. Robert Markus has found it useful for his own purposes to replace the religion/culture dichotomy with a distinction between 'sacred', 'secular', and 'profane' aspects of society. The nature of sacred, secular, and profane spheres of life, where they overlapped or excluded one another, where exactly the boundaries lay, was a matter for continual negotiation throughout the development of late classical and early medieval Christianity, and there was rarely, if ever, complete agreement even among the highest members of the Christian orthodoxy.[116]

Orisha!"', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 31 (2001), 336–53. A fuller critique of phenomenological approaches to religion in general is G. D. Flood, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (London: Cassell, 1999).

[113] R. W. Hefner, 'Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion', in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. by R. W. Hefner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 3–44 (p. 4).

[114] C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 89. For further discussion within a medieval context, see P. Biller, 'Words and the Medieval Notion "Religion"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 351–69.

[115] A. Demyttenaere, *The Claustralization of the World* (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 1997), p. 2.

[116] Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 9–15.

## Christianity and Conversion in the Mission of St Boniface

Markus's observations were equally true in the eighth century, when boundaries of 'proper' Christian behaviour were of special concern for Boniface and his fellow missionaries. We are fortunate that this concern was shared by churchmen throughout the medieval period, for they were responsible for preserving and copying the many letters between Boniface and his correspondents, in particular the popes, in which matters of Catholic orthodoxy and orthopraxy were frequently discussed and definitive papal judgements given. By examining these surviving letters we can to some extent determine how Boniface and his contacts perceived and defined both their own form of orthodox Christianity and the paganism with which they contrasted it. This process by its very nature involved drawing boundaries between the sacred, profane, and 'what was left in a penumbra of contingent accidentals, indifferent or inessential to the core of their religion'.[117]

As Boniface's mission progressed into the borderlands, so more and more customs crept into the penumbra of 'correct' Christianity. The eating of horse flesh was forbidden, the Pope advised him;[118] offerings for the dead were permitted, but only if the deceased had been a baptized Christian;[119] on the use of 'crystals' — for what purpose Pope Zacharias does not say — there was no scriptural or patristic tradition.[120] When we speak of the 'Christianity' of Boniface, therefore, we must remember that around the core of his essential belief and practice lay a wide zone of shadow and ambiguity, which he, as papal legate, was charged with narrowing and clarifying in minute detail. And when we come to consider his interaction with members of the Frankish secular and lay elite in Chapter 7, we shall see that this zone was already a great deal narrower for Boniface than for most.

An inevitable consequence of our overwhelming dependence on the letters of the missionaries is that we are restricted to their point of view when we consider terms such as *pagan* and *paganism*. I will use these terms frequently throughout the book, and here make the qualification that they do not represent a value judgement on my part. By 'pagan' I mean simply those people and those activities that the missionaries labelled 'pagan' (*paganus* or *gentilis*), regardless of whether

---

[117] Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, p. 15.

[118] Tangl, ep. 87, p. 196, ll. 24–28.

[119] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, l. 29, to p. 51, l. 4.

[120] 'De christallis autem, ut adseruisti, nullam habemus traditionem': Tangl, ep. 87, p. 197, ll. 10–11.

others or the 'pagans' themselves would use the same label. Since my main concern is with the perceptions and worlds of meaning of the missionary community, I do not believe that this categorization is invalid or has no empirical value; such a problem would only arise if I regarded it as an objective category that had a validity external to the worldview of the missionary community.

Having discussed the definition of the terms *Christianity* and *paganism*, we can now briefly consider the matter of religious conversion. Hefner comes to a sociological definition of conversion as not a complete rupture in the world of cultural meanings and associations,

> but an adjustment in self-identification through the at least nominal acceptance of religious actions or beliefs deemed more fitting, useful or true. [...] It always involves commitment to a new kind of moral authority and a new or reconceptualized social identity.[121]

In other words, conversion does not necessarily change a person's world, but their place within it and perception of it. Consider Shenoute of Atripe's exasperated rebuke when the man who had come to him for advice turned aside to offer a respectful greeting to a crow, a bird traditionally held to have prophetic abilities:

> Even if I take away all your household idols, am I able to cover up the sun? Should I build walls all along the west, so that you do not pray towards the sunset? Shall I stand watch on the banks of the Nile, and in every lagoon, lest you make libations on its waters?[122]

A convert's world is not easily, if ever, transformed wholesale. Such 'superstitions' as divining the future from the cawing of a crow are unthinking and natural to those who inherit them; rooted by generations of practice, they hold together the fabric of all the ideas and things in the world, and even the act of baptism is not enough to dislodge them. Only during the gradual process of Christianization does the convert's world begin to shift and be remodelled, over years, even generations, into a new form, 'rationalized' according to the precepts of the new religion.[123] The form that this version of Christianity will take is unlikely to be utterly faithful to the form of its most orthodox practitioners (i.e., those wielding highest authority responsible for the missionary activity), but is dependent on the nature of the pre-Christian culture, the aims of the missionaries, and the access

---

[121] Hefner, 'Introduction', p. 17.

[122] Quoted in Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 148.

[123] I use 'rationalized' here in the more general sense of Hefner, 'Introduction', pp. 14–16, who does not restrict a perceived quality of 'rationality' only to the world religions.

the converts have to orthodox, doctrinal Christianity in the form of preachers or texts.[124]

Ian Wood usefully defines *conversion* as the 'spiritual change of an individual', and uses the term *Christianization* to refer to the 'process of evangelization both before and after baptism'.[125] I will use the term *conversion* to refer to the act of baptism alone. One practical reason for doing this is that we cannot possibly know whether each of the one hundred thousand baptized converts referred to in a given letter experienced a dramatic sense of spiritual rebirth. Boniface and the orthodox milieu of our period regarded baptism as the crucial watershed in the conversion of an individual, without which one was not a member of the Christian family.[126] Yet while baptism might have made a Christian, it did not necessarily make a *good* Christian, and Boniface's determination to spread the rite of post-baptismal confirmation demonstrates the importance he placed on the orthodox instruction of new converts under episcopal supervision.[127] I will broaden the definition of Christianization to mean 'the attempted restructuring of the personal and social world views that constitute culture in accordance with the orthodox world view of the religious authorities responsible for the process', in much the same sense as Markus uses it.[128] The usefulness of such a broader (if cumbersome) definition is that Christianization need not include only straight-forward evangelization, but the passing of laws to reinforce correct Christian behaviour, the official reinterpretation of certain festivals and customs in Christian terms, and so on.

## Conclusion

In the last two chapters I have established the basis of the study and shown how I intend to carry forward the existing scholarship. With a sufficiently nuanced understanding of our sources, it becomes all too obvious that Boniface did not dominate the mission field in Germania to the extent that his cult and reputation

---

[124] Hefner, 'Introduction', p. 17. There is an echo here of the 'levels of culture' used by Jacques Le Goff to explain the process of Christianization in medieval Europe, discussed in Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 10–12.

[125] Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 3; also Wood, 'An Absence of Saints?', p. 336.

[126] See Chapter 7, pp. 376–80, below.

[127] See Chapter 7, pp. 380–87, below.

[128] Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 3–12.

would suggest.[129] This is no reason to ignore or sideline him, however. On the contrary, precisely because of the distracting nature of his posthumous fame, I believe it is important to deepen our contextual understanding of the man and his work via the application of fresh methodologies.

I have chosen to do this not through a new biographical study, of which there is already an abundance, or through relating Boniface to the pan-European expansion of Christianity under the Carolingian flag, which has been done regularly and thoroughly. Rather, I have chosen the middle route of a detailed regional study, rescuing Boniface from historical abstraction and returning him to the landscape he knew, among the people with whom he worked. I have chosen Hessia in particular because it was here, not in Thuringia, Bavaria, or the Frankish heartlands, that Boniface realized his calling as a missionary; in Hessia he met, challenged, and converted pagans who had had but little contact with Frankish Christianity; in Hessia alone he created almost from scratch an ecclesiastical landscape that survived until the Reformation. As Ian Wood has remarked:

> The basic outine of the Christianization of Europe has been established by generations of scholars. In order to take the history of Christianization beyond what has been mapped in outline, it is necessary to return to the experiences of individuals and above all to understand the perceptions of the men who evangelized pagan Europe.[130]

Experience and perception: these are the constituent parts of what it is to be human. We have a chart that encompasses the entirety of Europe and the thousand years of the conversion period. It is time now to bring ourselves to earth, as it were, to strap on our boots, and to follow Boniface into the intricate gloom of the Hessian woods. But before we follow him there, we must find him in Wessex.

[129] Wood, 'An Absence of Saints?', p. 343.
[130] Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 20.

# Part II. Context

But oh! what a melancholy portion of the inhabitants of the globe still remain in the shadow of death!

— Rev. George Burder of Coventry, in an address to broaden support for the fledgling London Missionary Society, 1795

# WEST SAXON ORIGINS

As mentioned in the historiography, most studies of Boniface's insular background have been undertaken by English-speaking scholars. These tend to be limited in scope, however, and retain a strong bias towards Boniface's Continental career. Greenaway, Levison, and Frank Barlow present biographical discussions of the saint's early life, and also something of the context of contemporary Wessex.[1] Recently Barbara Yorke has paid extensive attention to the West Saxon context of Boniface's youth. She focused on four main areas: Boniface's family connections; the importance of kin in a 'pioneer' society, especially regarding the prominence of female family members; the conflict between the Anglo-Saxon and British churches; and what she terms the 'missionary impulse', that is, the legacy of missions from Rome, Ireland, and Northumbria that created an atmosphere wherein self-imposed exile *pro amore Christi* — 'for love of Christ' — was seen as one of the highest of religious callings.[2]

Since there is no shortage of English-language biographies of Boniface, here I shall give only a very brief summary of his pre-Continental life before going on to consider the wider West Saxon context into which he was born and within which he grew to adulthood. According to Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* (written 754x68), Boniface was born as Wynfreth to West Saxon parents and was sent as a child

---

[1] Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 70–93; F. Barlow, 'The English Background', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 11–29. See also H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (London: Batsford, 1991), pp. 262–70, and A. Orchard, 'Boniface', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by M. Lapidge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 69–70.

[2] Yorke, 'The Insular Background'.

oblate to Exeter in Devon.[3] The date of his birth is uncertain, but probably lay between 672 and 675, with scholarly consensus leaning towards the latter year;[4] a popular tradition linking his birth to Crediton, a village six miles north-west of Exeter, dates only from the fourteenth century.[5] Upon reaching adulthood (695x700), Boniface decided that the library at Exeter was insufficient for his needs and was permitted to transfer to the monastery of Nhutscelle (Nursling, now a suburb of Southampton in Hampshire). The abbot of this institution was Wynbert, who may have been somehow related to Boniface.[6]

The young monk was establishing himself as a promising monastic teacher when a rebellion against King Ine of Wessex (688 to 725) led to his election as ecclesiastical envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury.[7] Following this, Boniface began moving among the highest echelons of the West Saxon church, frequently attending church councils.[8] In 716, seized by a desire to become a missionary, he journeyed to Frisia, where the Northumbrian Willibrord had already been active

---

[3] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 1, p. 6, l. 20, to p. 7, l. 2.

[4] For discussion, see Barlow, 'The English Background', pp. 26–27, who follows the date of 'about 675' suggested by Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 70. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 103, gives a date 'auf 672/3, spätestens 675'; Andy Orchard, 'Boniface', p. 69, '*c.* 675'; Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, p. 8, 'as early as 672 or as late as 680'; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 13, '672/675'.

[5] Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 70 n. 2.

[6] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 2, p. 9, ll. 3–11. Patrick Hase has suggested that Willibald's Nhutscelle was actually located at Romsey, three miles to the north of Nursling. Romsey was the site of a famous nunnery and probable minster from at least 907 (the earliest documentary reference), while Nursling was an insignificant manorial church at the time of Domesday, with no hint that it had once been the site of a prominent monastic school ('The Mother Churches of Hampshire', in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950–1200*, ed. by J. Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), pp. 45–66 (p. 46)). Since archaeological investigations have not uncovered evidence that the ecclesiastical site of Romsey was in use before the ninth century, the simplest explanation is that the minster was transferred there from Nursling some time before 907. See B. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 184–85; J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 300. Yorke's plausible suggestion that Wynbert was related to Wynfreth-Boniface is based on the shared first element of their names and the fact that Boniface was initially chosen to succeed Wynbert as abbot ('The Insular Background', p. 25).

[7] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 13, l. 20, to p. 15, l. 7.

[8] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 15, ll. 2–7.

as a missionary for twenty-five years.[9] A rebellion by the Frisian king Radbod forced Boniface to abandon his plans and return to Wessex,[10] where he remained for two years, declining the offer of the abbacy of Nursling after Wynbert's death.[11] In 718 he left once again for the Continent, this time permanently. All of this account is derived from Willibald, but two corroborating pieces of evidence are a later reference by Boniface to 'Winbert, my former abbot and teacher' in a letter of 742x46,[12] and his friend and relative Leoba's comment that Boniface had been an old friend of her father's in the 'western regions'.[13]

In this chapter we shall concentrate on four aspects of the West Saxon context which are most directly relevant to the execution of Boniface's mission in Hessia. First we shall consider the social and political context of late seventh-century Wessex, in particular the way in which an elite West Saxon identity was constructed around the myth of a Continental origin and a tradition of violent hostility towards the Britons. Second, we will examine the history of the West Saxon church, which had its faltering origins in the time of Boniface's grandfather and was undergoing a period of intense reform and expansion during his youth. The third section will consider the worldview of the monastic environment in which Boniface was educated, focusing on the fundamental importance of spiritual purity and ritual orthodoxy. We shall then move on to consider the nature of kingship in late seventh-century Wessex, especially the reigns of Cædwalla (685–88), whose violent rise to power and sponsorship of a pro-Roman ecclesiastical elite may have indirectly influenced Boniface's attitude towards dealing with secular rulers, and King Ine (688–726), who attempted to strengthen the bonds between king and church to an unprecedented extent. Under Ine's sponsorship, a system of religious centres was established in close connection to networks of secular government, a relationship also embodied within his law code. Finally, I will examine the system of pastoral care in place in the Solent region, including the extent to which it was under episcopal direction.

[9] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 15, l. 8, to p. 16, l. 11.

[10] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 16, l. 12, to p. 18, l. 3.

[11] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 5, p. 18, l. 4, to p. 20, l. 9.

[12] 'Uuinbertus abbas et magister quondam meus': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, l. 7.

[13] 'Rogo tuam clementiam, ut memorare digneris prioris amicitiae, quam iam dudum cum patre meo copulasti, cuius vocabulum est Dynne, in occiduis regionibus': Tangl, ep. 29, p. 52, ll. 17–19.

*The Saxon Elite*

### Swallowcliffe Down

The twenty-first century driver who leaves Salisbury heading due west will most likely take the A30, a modern, efficiently tarmaced road that swings down into a low valley and runs along its length to Shaftesbury. For some 15 kilometres they will be accompanied on the left-hand side by a long, flat chalk ridge. In Anglo-Saxon times, and the several millennia before that, this ridge was a major transit route between Salisbury and Shaftesbury. The ancient route survives, although the age of the automobile has demoted it to a scenic bridlepath; its name, the Old Shaftesbury Drove, retains the memory of its economic importance for the pre-mechanized pastoral economy of the Wiltshire Downs, while its importance to royal government in tenth-century Wessex is indicated by its former name of *herepæþ*, 'army road'.[14] More than a thousand years earlier the ridge had attracted an Iron Age hillfort, and a thousand years earlier still, several large Bronze Age burial mounds.

In the Saxon period a pair of these ancient barrows, now ploughed to destruction, still sat like sentinels above the northern escarpment of Swallowcliffe Down (see Fig. 2). Sometime in the late seventh century, perhaps around Boniface's birth or during his earliest years, a young woman died and was given an extravagant burial in the largest of them. Her grave was dug into the heart of the barrow. She was laid on a bed in a wooden chamber surrounded by hangings and blankets, with symbols of wealth and hospitality placed around her: a pair of glass cups; iron- and bronze-bound buckets; a rich bag of leather, wood, silver, and gold; a maplewood chest holding a silver spoon, brooches, beads, a fine comb, a bronze sprinkler, and more besides. Once the furnishings were complete and the body interred, the chamber was sealed and the mound rebuilt above it.[15]

[14] P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), Charter no. S 468 (henceforth S), a charter of King Edmund from 940.

[15] On the mound burial of Swallowcliffe Down, see G. Speake, *A Saxon Bed Burial on Swallowcliffe Down*, HBMCE Report, 10 (London: Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, 1989); E. O'Brien, *Post-Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England: Burial Practices Revealed*, BAR British Series, 289 (Oxford: Hedges, 1999), ref. 1111; H. Williams, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 27–35; S. Pollington, *Anglo-Saxon Burial Mounds: Princely Burials in the 6th and 7th Centuries* (Swaffham: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2008), pp. 179–82. Pollington, ibid., p. 181 n. 372, expresses scepticism that the furniture in the grave chamber should be reconstructed as a bed.

Fig. 2. Swallowcliffe Down seen from the east.

There is a great deal we do not know about the grave and its occupant. She was probably aged between eighteen and twenty-five, of average height, and a member of a noble Saxon family, perhaps even royal and, at this date, very likely Christian.[16] Yet we do not know her name, and, as Howard William remarks, nothing has remained of such burial ceremonials as feasting or prayer which leave no physical trace but which may have preceded, accompanied, and succeeded the act of burial itself.[17] The precise associations and meanings of reusing an ancient burial mound are also lost to us, although we can, like Williams, surmise some of its general significance. 'The act of reusing monuments', he writes, 'not only linked past with present, and the living with the dead and the supernatural, it also propagated myths of Germanic origin and identity.'[18]

---

[16] Williams, *Death and Memory*, p. 33.

[17] Williams, *Death and Memory*, pp. 33–35.

[18] H. Williams, 'Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 90–108 (p. 104). On the Anglo-Saxon use of mound burials to assert the symbolic domination of landscape, see also S. Semple, 'A Fear of the Past: The Place of the Prehistoric Burial Mound in the Ideology of Middle and Later Anglo-Saxon England', *World Archaeology*,

We do know that those present at the internment were following a well-established custom, since for two or three generations people had been burying their illustrious dead by the dozen in great barrows — in Carver's phrase 'the principle panegyric of a non-literate age'[19] — on the bald chalk skylines of southern Wiltshire. We also know, as they could not have, that this was a dying custom, and that the young woman in the mound of Swallowcliffe Down was among the last laid to rest in this way. At the time of her death the tradition was already old-fashioned; barrow burials would be virtually unknown among the West Saxon elite of the next generation, who instead buried their dead in Christian cemeteries without the elaborate material furnishings of the sixth and seventh centuries.[20]

The mound burial on Swallowcliffe Down was thus at the chronological end of a tradition, but at its physical edge, too. The chalk ridge on which the barrow was raised gives fine views in all directions, but especially towards the west. Those people who buried the woman on Swallowcliffe Down could have stood facing this direction with a landscape peppered by a hundred years of Saxon burial mounds at their back. At their feet, close to the barrow, the *herepæþ* ran along the chalk spine of the downs. It followed the ridge west as it sank down into the lower valleys, continuing over the border of modern Dorset to reach the old British church of Shaftesbury, only 12 kilometres distant. When the young woman died and was buried on Swallowcliffe Down, one chapter of West Saxon history died with her. A generation earlier this had been the frontier, and Shaftesbury had most likely been still in British hands. But now, after decades of dynastic rivalry and the frantic appropriation of space and time that the mound burials of Wessex

30 (1998), 109–26; S. Semple, 'Burials and Political Boundaries in the Avebury Region, North Wiltshire', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History: Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, 12 (2003), 72–91; Härke, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure', pp. 150–51.

[19] M. Carver, 'Reflections on the Meanings of Monumental Barrows in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, ed. by S. Lucy and A. Reynolds, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 17 (London: Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2002), pp. 132–43 (p. 136).

[20] See H. Geake, *The Use of Grave-Goods in Conversion Period England, c. 600–850*, BAR British Series, 261 (Oxford: Hedges, 1997); H. Geake, 'Persistent Problems in Seventh-Century Burial', in *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, ed. by Lucy and Reynolds, pp. 144–55; Härke, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure', pp. 145–48; H. Härke, 'Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite in the Seventh Century', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. by M. O. H. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 149–65 (p. 164).

represent, the Saxons were marching ever farther west, enveloping Shaftesbury and the land beyond, and the kingdom was about to enter a new period of centralized Christian rule under a strong monarch. Swallowcliffe Down offers a vantage point from which we can explore this historical trajectory further: not only the place in which the Saxon elite of Boniface's youth found themselves, but where they had come from, where they believed they had come from, and where they hoped they were heading.

## Historical Origins

The principal historical sources for seventh-century Wessex are Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*,[21] completed in 731, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,[22] the common stock of which was originally compiled in the late ninth century. The references are brief, at points conflicting, and difficult to interpret with confidence, but together with the archaeological evidence they can teach us much about the world into which Boniface was born *c*. 675.[23] The very confusion of the surviving historical sources gives the impression that the early to mid-seventh century, the main period of the Wiltshire barrow burials, was a time of considerable turbulence among the West Saxons. Indeed, until the mid-680s we cannot accurately talk of Wessex as a single political unit at all, for the name only appears in the historical record from about that time. Bede states quite clearly that the name *West Saxons* was first employed by King Cædwalla, whose people had previously been called the Gewissae,[24] a powerful Saxon group based in the upper Thames

---

[21] Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) (henceforth *HE*).

[22] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, III: *MS A*, ed. by J. Bately (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) (henceforth *ASC*).

[23] For a full discussion of the interpretative difficulties of the seventh-century sources, see D. P. Kirby, 'Problems of Early West Saxon History', *English Historical Review*, 80 (1965), 10–29 (pp. 11–12); also Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 171–72.

[24] Bede twice states that the West Saxons (*Occidentales Saxones*) were formerly known as the Gewissae: *HE*, III. 7, pp. 232–33; IV. 15, pp. 380–81. Centwine (r. 676–685/86) and Cædwalla occasionally styled themselves in charters as *rex Saxonum* (S 237 and S 235 respectively for the earliest reliable charters; no genuine charters of earlier kings survive). Aldhelm describes Centwine, Cædwalla, and Ine as rulers of the *imperium Saxonum* (*Carmina ecclesiastica*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by R. Ehwald, MGH SS, Auctores antiquissimi, 15 (1919), pp. 11–32 (p. 14, l. 3; p. 16, l. 37)). The term *rex Westsaxonum* first appears in a reliable charter of Ine dated 688x90 (S 252). The only example of a West Saxon king styling himself *rex Gewisorum* in a charter is S 256, a grant of

valley around Dorchester.[25] This district saw some of the earliest furnished weapon inhumations of the post-Roman period, a tradition which probably began with the settlement of Saxon mercenaries in the fifth century and culminated in the early seventh century with such wealthy mound burials as Cuddesdon, Lowbury Hill and Taplow.[26]

At this time the Gewissae were surrounded by rivals: East Saxons along the lower Thames, Jutes to the south, Britons to the west, and Mercians to the north (see Map 2). According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, King Cynegils fought the Mercians to a stalemate at Cirencester in 628,[27] and in 635 he formed an alliance with Oswald of Northumbria against them. The Gewissae first appear in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* with this latter event, for it also involved the foundation of their Northumbrian-sponsored bishopric at Dorchester.[28] The first bishop of Dorchester was the Italian Birinus, who baptized Cynegils with Oswald as godfather. However, the alliance with Northumbria disintegrated after the death of Cynegils *c*. 642. His son Cenwalh assumed power only to be driven into exile in East Anglia by the pagan Mercian king Penda, a misfortune which Bede implies was down to Cenwalh's rejection of Christianity. Three years later Cenwalh was 'restored to his kingdom' as a newly baptized Christian.[29]

---

Cuthred (r. 740–56) to Malmesbury dating from 745. For further discussion of the name change of the Gewissae to the West Saxons, see H. Kleinschmidt, 'The Geuissae and Bede: On the Innovativeness of Bede's Concept of the *Gens*', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by J. Hill and M. Swan, International Medieval Research, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 77–102; Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 57–59; R. Coates, 'On Some Controversy Surrounding *Gewissae/Gewissei*, *Cerdic* and *Ceawlin*', *Nomina*, 13 (1990), 1–11.

[25] B. Yorke, 'The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the Origins of Wessex', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by S. Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 84–96 (p. 94).

[26] A. Meaney, *A Gazeteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), especially pp. 49, 59, 207; T. M. Dickinson, *Cuddesdon and Dorchester-on-Thames: Two Early Anglo-Saxon 'Princely' Sites in Wessex*, BAR British Series, 1 (Oxford: Hedges, 1974); Pollington, *Anglo-Saxon Burial Mounds*, pp. 163–66, 168–71; M. G. Fulford and S. J. Ripon, 'Lowbury Hill, Oxon: A Re-assessment of the Probable Romano-Celtic Temple and Anglo-Saxon Barrow', *Archaeological Journal*, 151 (1994), 185–88; Williams, *Death and Memory*, pp. 202–04; Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 34–35; L. Alcock, *Economy, Society and Warfare among the Britons and Saxons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1987), pp. 271–72.

[27] *ASC*, p. 28.

[28] *HE*, III. 7, pp. 232–33.

[29] '[R]estitutus esset in regnum': *HE*, III. 7, pp. 234–35.

Map 2. Wessex *c.* 700, showing historic counties.

The old Gewissan heartland of the upper Thames, however, was ravaged by Penda's son Wulfhere in 661, who struck as far as the south coast, conquering the Isle of Wight and transferring it to the king of the South Saxons.[30] After this date the Gewissae apparently abandoned Dorchester and, whether they were forced to recognize Mercian overlordship or were able to reassert themselves against it, established a new base in southern Hampshire with its bishopric at Winchester.[31]

At the same time as they were losing ground to Mercia in the upper Thames, the Gewissan Saxons were pushing west through Wiltshire into Somerset and Dorset, taking territory from the Britons and burying their dead in the barrows that staked a claim on the landscape, its past and present. Aside from Swallowcliffe Down, one of the most dramatic is the wealthy mid-seventh-century weapon burial on Rodmead Hill, a western spur of the Wiltshire downs overlooking directly the long forested ridge of Penselwood, which still marks the boundary between Wiltshire and Somerset.[32] Penselwood is probably to be identified with

---

[30] *ASC*, p. 30.

[31] Yorke, 'Jutes of Hampshire', p. 94; Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 34–35.

[32] On the barrow at Rodmead Hill, see Meaney, *Gazeteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites*, p. 273; Pollington, *Anglo-Saxon Burial Mounds*, p. 178.

Peonnan,[33] where, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Cenwalh defeated the Britons in 658, pursuing them as far as the river Parret.[34] This reference, lying within the horizon of historical credibility,[35] may record the victory that finally secured Dorset and Somerset for the Saxons,[36] and brought into their possession the important British churches of Sherborne, Shaftesbury, Glastonbury, and Wareham,[37] as well as the estates of the major British landowners. In the spring of 661, shortly before the Mercian invasion of the upper Thames, Cenwalh fought the British at Posentesbyrg,[38] possibly Posbury, an Iron Age hillfort which lies 12 kilometres north-west of Exeter.[39] With the outbreak of a plague in 664 which struck the south coast before spreading across the British Isles, devastating numerous monastic communities, killing between two and four of the eight Anglo-Saxon bishops, and possibly reaping comparable damage among parts of the wider population,[40] there must have been little immediate chance for the British kingdom of Dumnonia to regain what it had lost.

[33] Pinhoe, north of Exeter, has also been suggested as the location of Peonnan; see, e.g., L. R. Laing, *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland, c. 400–1200* (London: Methuen, 1975), p. 144. Penselwood is generally preferred because it accords better with the *Chronicle*'s statement that following the battle the Britons were chased as far as the river Parret, which lies west of Penselwood but north-east of Pinhoe. See Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 63.

[34] *ASC*, p. 30.

[35] David Dumville and Dorothy Whitelock have argued for the likelihood of the West Saxons maintaining regnal lists and annals from at least the mid-eighth century, upon which the earliest versions of the *Chronicle* were based. D. Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 21–66 (pp. 22–23); *ASC*, p. xxii. On the dating of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, see J. Bately, 'The Compilation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 64 (1978), 93–129.

[36] According to the *Chronicle*, Cynegils and Cwichelm won a major victory over the Britons in 614 at Beandun, the location of which remains uncertain (*ASC*, p. 27). Andrew Breeze has suggested that Beandun should be located at Brean Down on the northern Somerset coast and suggests that the West Saxons (i.e., Gewissae) may have undertaken successful invasions of British territory several decades before they permanently annexed it ('The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 614 and Brean Down, Somerset', *Notes & Queries*, n.s., 51 (2005), 234–35).

[37] See T. A. Hall, *Minster Churches in the Dorset Landscape*, BAR British Series, 304 (Oxford: Hedges, 2000), p. 83; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 63–64. See also below, pp. 79–82.

[38] *ASC*, p. 30.

[39] W. G. Hoskins, *The Westward Expansion of Wessex* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1960), p. 14.

[40] J. R. Maddicott, 'Plague in Seventh-Century England', *Past and Present*, 156 (1997), 7–54 (pp. 9–16).

Given the coincidence of time and place, we may well wonder whether the noble Saxon buried on Rodmead Hill had fought in the battle of Penselwood, and whether his monument commemorated the battle as much as it did him. Boniface's father or grandfathers may also have been under Cenwalh's leadership at this time and perhaps shared in the spoils of the victories at Penselwood and Posbury. We know, at least, that only ten or fifteen years after the latter battle Boniface's parents held land somewhere in the district of Exeter and Posbury, taken from the Britons by force or treaty. This was a true generation of conquerers and pioneers, the adventurous branch of an extended family that was also prominent in the new Gewissan heartlands of southern Hampshire,[41] enriched by war and enthusiastic in their support of the new religion which had brought them victory at the expense of the Britons and Jutes.[42]

## Mythical Origins

This historical context is central to our understanding of Boniface's self-identity as a Saxon, but no less important is the way in which the West Saxons framed and perceived their past and present. Boniface was, first of all, born into a society whose elite conducted and glorified war. 'The cultural values of the Anglo-Saxons', as Rosamund Faith succinctly puts it, 'were deeply imbued with violence.'[43] Boniface's direct contemporary St Guthlac, before his conversion to the religious life, spent nine years of his young manhood fighting on the Welsh marches with a Mercian warband, as befitted a young Anglo-Saxon noble. His biographer Felix, writing probably in the 730s, describes how his subject was seduced by the anticipated glories of war:

> Now when his youthful strength had increased, and a noble desire for command burned in his young breast, he remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old, and as though wakening from sleep, he changed his disposition and gathering bands of followers took up arms.[44]

[41] Yorke, 'The Insular Background', p. 24.

[42] D. Hooke, 'The Anglo-Saxons in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries: Aspects of Location in Time and Space', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 65–99 (p. 66) writes that Anglo-Saxon origin myths embodied 'a kind of "Wild West" scenario which seems to have played as major a role in Anglo-Saxon tradition as its short-lived counterpart in the American West'.

[43] R. Faith, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p. 7.

[44] 'Igitur cum adolescentiae vires increvissent, et iuvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fervesceret, tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta reminiscens, veluti ex sopore evigilatus,

Felix seems to have intended his *Vita Guthlaci* to appeal to Mercian power structures, to the young king Æthelbald and his followers.[45] The 'valiant deeds of heroes of old' embodied the warrior ideology of ruling Anglo-Saxons,[46] including those nobles who eagerly carried weaponry inscribed with Old Testament damnations of the enemies of God.[47]

Although Boniface's destiny lay within the cloisters rather than on the battlefield, he was born into the same class that conducted and glorified rule by the sword. Before his entry into Exeter minster in the early 680s, and possibly even after it, he may well have heard such stories told of his own Saxon forebears. These stories played a decisive role in the formulation of West Saxon identity in the late seventh century, and included two fundamental elements: the Continental origin of Cerdic, legendary progenitor of the West Saxon *gens*, and the violent subjugation of the native Britons. The ethnic dimension of this group identity and the implications of Saxon-British political conflict for religious identity were to have a powerful influence on the course of Boniface's career.

The famous tradition of the fifth-century arrival of Hengist and Horsa in Kent appears in numerous sources between the sixth and ninth centuries, principally Gildas's *De excidio Britanniae*, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and was in all probability developed from earlier oral traditions.[48] The West Saxons, meanwhile, had their

---

mutata mente, adgregatis satellitum turmis, sese in arma convertit': Felix, *Felix's Life of St Guthlac*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), chap. 16, pp. 80–81.

[45] C. Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 29–66 (pp. 50–51).

[46] On the cultivation of Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies through oral narrative tradition, see H. Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition', *Journal of Medieval History*, 7 (1981), 215–48.

[47] The famous Staffordshire Hoard of martial gold fittings, unearthed in July 2009, includes a remarkable golden strip which likely dates from Guthlac's lifetime and bears an inscription from Numbers 10. 35: 'Surge domine et dissipentur inimici tui et fugiant qui oderunt te a facie tua' (Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee, flee from before thy face).

[48] Historians and archaeologists generally regard the *adventus Saxonum* as narrated by Gildas in the sixth century, and in the eighth century both adopted by Bede and elaborated by the *Historia Brittonum*, as preserving a core of mid-fifth-century historical events. See N. Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church, 400–1066* (London: Hambledon, 2000), pp. 79–80; J. N. L. Myers, *The English Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 14. Nicholas

own *adventus* figure in the form of Cerdic, the supposed founder of Wessex. The sources concerning Cerdic are few and late, and must be approached with caution when determining his role in late seventh-century dynastic myth.[49] They include the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the genealogical regnal list of the dynasty of Cerdic[50] and the royal genealogies of the Anglian Collection.[51] Each of these sources dates from the ninth or tenth century, and it is vital to appreciate that the overall impression they give of a continuous line of West Saxon succession from Cerdic's arrival at the Solent in 494/95 up to King Æthelwulf († 858) is a fiction of the mid-ninth-century compilers of the West Saxon genealogical regnal list. Nonetheless, these compilers were manipulating and reformulating existing traditions rather than creating them from scratch, and our task is to determine how much of the later myth might have originated in Boniface's time or earlier.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s scanty narrative of Cerdic's arrival and conquests certainly contains hints of very ancient oral tradition. The narrative actually records three separate landfalls, beginning with the arrival in 495 of Cerdic and his 'son' Cynric (*sunu*, which can also mean 'descendant'; in the Anglian

Brooks has argued that the eighth-century *Historia Brittonum* account of the *adventus* was based on a Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon version, which itself incorporated myths from the early seventh-century Kentish court of King Æthelberht (*Anglo-Saxon Myths*, pp. 82–87). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records a series of battles between 449 and 473 fought by Hengist, Horsa, and his son, Oisc, against the British. Gildas's famous account of the Anglo-Saxon devastation of Britain is in Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978), chaps 22–26, pp. 96–99; for Bede's derivative account, *HE*, see I. 15–16, pp. 30–33. For a comparative overview of Anglo-Saxon origin myths, see B. Yorke, 'Anglo-Saxon Origin Legends', in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters*, ed. by J. Barrow and A. Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 15–29.

[49] On the methodological problems of using genealogical lists and origin myths as sources of historical information, see D. Thornton, *Kings, Chronologies and Genealogies: Studies in the Political History of Early Medieval Ireland and Wales*, Prosopographia et Genealogica, 10 (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, Linacre College, 2003), pp. 5–7, 27.

[50] Dumville's edition of the text can be found in D. N. Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 1–32; for his study of its chronological implications, see Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex'.

[51] See K. Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287–348; D. N. Dumville, 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 23–50; D. N. Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer and I. Woods (Leeds: School of History, University of Leeds, 1977), pp. 72–104.

Collection Cynric is listed as Cerdic's grandson).[52] The *Chronicle* entry for 501 records a second *adventus* at Portsmouth of one Port with his two sons. Finally, in 514, the *Chronicle* claims that Stuf and Wihtgar arrived, kinsmen of Cerdic, who some years later granted them the Isle of Wight. In all, the founding father and son of the West Saxon dynasty fought and defeated the Britons nine times, thereby securing the rights of their descendants over the captured British territory.

Barbara Yorke has emphasized the clearly mythical elements in each arrival: the recurrence of two brothers, the set-piece battle upon landing which quickly routs the local Britons, and the obvious later derivation of personal names from geographical locations (Port from Latin *portus*, probably referring to Portchester, Wihtgar from Uectis, now the Isle of Wight, and the British ruler Natanleod who was vanquished by Cerdic and Cynric at Natanleaga, probably Netley).[53] The unusual personal name *Cerdic*, moreover, is probably derived from the British name *Ceretic*.[54] The *Chronicle*'s account of the mythical Cerdic's arrival links his activities to three local places: Cerdicesora, Cerdicesford, and Cerdiceslea, none of which survives. Like the *Chronicle*'s other suspicious etymologies, this probably represents the shaping of myth around existing place-names. Because of the threefold occurrence of the extremely rare personal name element *Cerdic-* in such a small area, Stenton plausibly suggests that the place-names did indeed derive from a single historical individual, though probably a post-Roman British ruler rather than a Saxon invader.[55] While there is thus little doubt that the arrival of

---

[52] Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', p. 60, suggests that later dynastic compilers, embarrassed that the founder of Wessex apparently passed over his own child in his choice of successor, deliberately changed Cynric from Cerdic's grandson to his son.

[53] Yorke, 'Jutes of Hampshire'; Yorke, 'Anglo-Saxon Origin Legends', pp. 17–19; see also Brooks, *Anglo-Saxon Myths*, pp. 88–89; G. J. Copley, *The Conquest of Wessex in the Sixth Century* (London: Phoenix House, 1954), pp. 165–68. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 20 n. 2, argues that Port was a genuine historical figure, notwithstanding the toponymical coincidence of Portsmouth, and Alcock, *Economy, Society and Warfare*, pp. 225–26, is inclined to support him on this point. With regard to Hengist and Horsa, some historians have considered their role as archetypal 'divine twins', mythical figures woven into a historical fabric. See B. Yorke, 'Fact or Fiction? The Written Evidence for the Fifth and Sixth Centuries AD', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 6 (1993), 45–50.

[54] D. Parsons, 'British *Caraticos, Old English Cerdic', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 33 (1997), 1–8.

[55] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 24–25.

the 'West Saxons' as preserved by the *Chronicle* is largely composed of fragments of folk myth reworked for the benefit of later dynastic propaganda, there are reasons to suppose that elements of the Cerdic tradition were established long before the ninth century.

Dumville suspected that the reign of King Ine (688–726) was one early point of invention or re-invention of the Cerdic tradition as transmitted via the ninth-century texts. The West Saxon genealogy of the Anglian Collection, the name given to a group of royal genealogies and regnal lists, traces Ine's pedigree back thirteen generations via Cerdic to the god Woden.[56] The fact that the genealogy ends with Ine and does not include any other Gewissan king of the seventh century strongly suggests that it was originally composed during his reign.[57] Furthermore, the shortness of the genealogy from Cerdic to Woden here (five generations) compared to Cerdic's elaborated genealogy in the late ninth century West Saxon genealogical and regnal list (nine generations) also suggests that the former source embodies an earlier tradition.[58]

Thus the Anglian Collection allows us to surmise the importance of Cerdic's *adventus* to Ine's West Saxon dynastic propaganda. The late seventh-century name change of the *gens* from Gewissae to West Saxons is also significant in the context of the Anglian Collection genealogical list, as Harald Kleinschmidt has discussed. He argues that, if we accept an origin of the list during the reign of Ine, the appearance in the list of an ancestor named Gewis, the supposed great-grandson of Woden and grandfather of Cerdic, represents a redefinition of dynastic identity.[59] Ine's predecessors, according to Bede, ruled the *gens* known as the Gewissae, a name whose precise etymology is unclear but which probably derives from a Germanic root word, not the otherwise unknown personal name

---

[56] The Anglian Collection is the name given to a group of royal genealogies and regnal lists covering most of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties and surviving in four extant manuscripts. Of these, the earliest to contain a West Saxon genealogy is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 183, dating from 934x37 and possibly drawn up at Glastonbury. The West Saxon king list is on folio 67ʳ of this manuscript. On the appearance of Woden as the *Stammvater* of several Anglo-Saxon royal lines, see E. John, 'The Point of Woden', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 6 (1993), 127–34.

[57] Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', pp. 25–26.

[58] *ASC*, p. 1. Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', pp. 59–60, suggests that the Anglian Collection was an indirect source for the West Saxon genealogical and regnal list.

[59] Kleinschmidt, 'Geuissae and Bede'.

Gewis.[60] The invention of an ancestor called *Gewis* in Ine's lineage turned the *Gewissae* into a royal dynasty rather than a *gens* in the broad sense, a function which was taken over by the apparently new term *West Saxons*.[61] Kleinschmidt thus attempts to reconcile the appearance of an ancestor called *Gewis* in Ine's genealogy at about the same time as *Gewissae* falls out of use as a group name, his explanation being that by placing Gewis two generations *before* Cerdic, Ine obtained a longer pedigree — the *sine qua non* of Anglo-Saxon kingship — than his rivals.[62] Crucially, this explanation implies that Cerdic was already regarded as the font of royal legitimacy by the time Ine took the throne.

It is difficult to say precisely what constituted the Cerdic myth at the close of the seventh century, since Stenton and Dumville have each observed that the surviving ninth-century version in the *Chronicle* contains obvious manipulations of older chronological schemes. In short, it seems that the *Chronicle* duplicates the arrival of the West Saxons (in 494/95 and again in 514) and the foundation of their kingdom six years later (500/01 and 519 respectively), an inconsistency that Stenton interpreted as the result of an annalist attempting to reconcile two versions of one narrative which had been disjointed by an interval of nineteen years (the length of the Easter cycle).[63] Dumville, through his exhaustive analysis of the West Saxon genealogical and regnal list,[64] argued that 494/95 was the secondary date and was a deliberate distortion of the earlier 514 tradition. He argued further that this genealogical and regnal list, which forms the preface to three manuscripts of the *Chronicle*,[65] embodied an even older tradition which placed Cerdic's arrival in 532/33, that is another nineteen years later.[66] Dumville remarked that these manipulations of tradition could not with certainty be pinned to any particular context or period and may have occurred at any time in Wessex between the late seventh century and ninth century. He suspected that

---

[60] Kleinschmidt, 'Geuissae and Bede', pp. 95–97.

[61] Kleinschmidt, 'Geuissae and Bede', pp. 97–98.

[62] Kleinschmidt, 'Geuissae and Bede', pp. 100–01.

[63] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 19–23.

[64] Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', p. 25.

[65] The West Saxon genealogical and regnal list survives in nine manuscripts, and in three of these manuscripts it prefaces a surviving version of the *Chronicle*. The versions of the *ASC* in question are A, B, and G according to Whitelock's classification.

[66] Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', pp. 44–55.

they were caused by factors external to Wessex itself, and he identified the Kentish and South Saxon *adventus* traditions as possible instigators: since these two dynasties placed their origins squarely in the fifth century, the West Saxons may have felt a need for comparable antiquity.[67]

The central observation to make here is that the later manipulation of dynastic tradition appears to have concerned chronology rather than content, for the inconsistencies between and within the texts relate to regnal lengths, not to the identities or names of Cerdic's successors. It matters little to us in which year the early West Saxons placed the *adventus* of Cerdic: it is more important to acknowledge that the story of his arrival on the Solent and his successful battles against the Britons, regardless of whether or not the tradition had already been placed in an annalistic framework of absolute dates, was a central part of elite West Saxon identity at the time of Boniface's youth, and was deliberately cultivated as part of dynastic history by Ine's court. It tied the King and his family to a single ancestral source of legitimacy, and identified their common place of origin beyond the sea — that is, Germania. This tradition had very little to do with historical events of the fifth and sixth centuries, as we shall now see, but a great deal to do with West Saxon expansion in the seventh century.

## The Negotiation of History, Myth, and Identity

Tradition and group identity are not static phenomena, but are continually redefined according to the needs and interests of the present.[68] How the earliest

---

[67] Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', pp. 62–65.

[68] The nature of social and ethnic identity is a large and growing topic amongst early medieval historians on the Continent in particular. The 'Vienna school' of Herwig Wolfram and Walter Pohl has explored this theme extensively: see H. Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by T. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. by T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); *Strategies of Distinction: The Constitution of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. by W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998); W. Pohl, 'Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 7–32; W. Pohl, 'Ethnizität des Frühmittelalters als interdisziplinäres Problem', *Das Mittelalter*, 4 (1999), 69–75; W. Pohl, 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: Eine Zwischenbalanz', in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. by K. Brunner and B. Merta (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 9–26; *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middles Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, ed. by R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger, and H. Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 2003); *Borders, Barriers and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers*

Anglo-Saxon leaders had in fact founded their dynasties, and what form of
political or cultural interaction they had pursued with the indigenous elite, hardly
mattered by the year 700, and mattered even less by the late ninth century when
three versions of the *Chronicle* were prefaced by a list of West Saxon kings
descended from a mythical hero with a British name. The Cerdic tradition served
to unite the early West Saxon elite through a common identity that involved —
indeed, depended upon — both a perceived Continental ancestry and the actual
subjugation of the native Britons.

The list of battles that forms the backbone of the *Chronicle*'s narrative clearly
does not survive in its late seventh-century form, since it is firmly tied to the
chronology of the later traditions; the three earliest battles (495, 501, 508), the
result of a duplication of Cerdic's arrival and initial conquests, can certainly be
discounted. Nevertheless, the battles are an integral part of the *Chronicle*'s
narrative and are closely tied to specific kings. Like the names of the West Saxon
rulers themselves, they may thus have been derived from dynastic oral history,
survived the chronological extensions with their sequence, locations, and pro-
tagonists largely undisturbed, and preserve the barest fragments of a dynastic
narrative of *adventus* and conquest that was cultivated among the West Saxon
elite during Boniface's early years.

It may also be the case that some form of the Cerdic myth existed in the Solent
region before the Gewissae appropriated it. The battles between the Britons and
the West Saxons recorded in the *Chronicle* can be divided into two geographical
zones. The earliest battles are all tightly grouped in southern Hampshire and the
Isle of Wight and take place within the lifetime of Cerdic, while the later group,
with the exception of Sarum in 552, are arranged around the original Gewissan
territory of the upper Thames. The dates of the battles have little historical
validity, having been imposed on oral traditions by the demands of the annalistic
format, and must be viewed as the result of dynastic narrative construction;[69] I
have retained the dates in Map 2 to illustrate the relative chronology of the battles
within the Cerdic tradition. Semple has remarked that the late sixth- and seventh-

*in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. by F. Curta, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 12
(Turnhout: Brepols, 2005). The role of memory and metanarrative in creating identity has also
attracted interest: P. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the
First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and
Innes; C. Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Social
Identity*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrell, pp. 253–76; R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the
Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), especially pp. 133–55.

[69] Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 32–34.

century mound burials of northern Wiltshire appear to form a discreet group, best explained by the determined attempts of a Gewissan elite to assert their superior status through exclusive funerary rituals.[70] The striking geographical contrast of battles recorded in the *Chronicle* may indicate that two separate traditions, one originating from the upper Thames region, and one from the Jutish region of southern Hampshire, have been merged into a single narrative.[71] This would coincide with the shift of the Gewissan power base from Dorchester to Winchester during the reign of Cenwalh.

Most important, the dominant ideology of these stories was not merely martial in nature, but ethnic. Late seventh-century dynastic myth-makers projected a stream of victories over the Britons back from the contemporary triumphs of Peonnan and Posentesbyrig into the distant past, and linked them to the shared ethnic origin of the West Saxon *gens* in the person of Cerdic, the archetypal Saxon hero who set about overthrowing British kings almost from the instant his feet landed on the sands of the Solent. By the end of the century, the West Saxon elite were styling themselves as the direct inheritors of a tradition which said nothing of the fact that the Gewissan dynasty had originated in the upper Thames valley and had only shifted to southern Hampshire in the 640s or 650s. The Gewissan Saxons, like the South Saxons and Kentish Jutes, felt the need for a clean moment of origin that linked them to the ancient Saxon tribes of Germania. When they took over southern Hampshire, it would have been as convenient for the Gewissae to appropriate and monopolize existing Jutish traditions as to try to wipe them out completely, especially since by depriving previous rulers of their own past they also denied any surviving relatives the very basis of their claim to legitimacy. The curiously threefold West Saxon *adventus* as it survives in the *Chronicle*, therefore, may in fact represent the absorption of two Jutish traditions — one for southern Hampshire, one for the Isle of Wight — into the dominant West Saxon tradition.

This becomes most clear in the context of Cædwalla's conquest of the Isle of Wight in 688, an event to which we shall return shortly. We know that for Cædwalla the physical extermination of the rival Jutish dynasty on the Isle of Wight was a matter of royal policy,[72] and in this he may merely have been following a precedent set during the Gewissan takeover of southern Hampshire a generation earlier. The story of Stuf and Wihtgar's arrival in the Solent, if it is

---

[70] Semple, 'Burials and Political Boundaries', pp. 82–83; see also Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 61–64.

[71] Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 34–35.

[72] See below, pp. 92–97.

the remnant of a separate Jutish *adventus* tradition, survives only because it was incorporated into the West Saxon origin myth. The *Chronicle* explicitly claims that Stuf and Wihtgar were relatives of Cerdic, and clearly subordinate to him: not only did they arrive later, but he delegated the Isle of Wight to them. It would be difficult for any surviving Jutish pretenders to base their claim to legitimacy on a tradition that had been so cleverly absorbed into the triumphal West Saxon narrative of Cerdic and his followers. This new tradition obliterated any hint of conflict between rival Jutish or Saxon groups, asserted Cerdic, and by implication his descendants, as the clear and undisputed rulers of all West Saxons, and consistently designated the Britons as the proper target of military aggression.

So much for the myth: during Boniface's infancy and youth, the Gewissae would have had real need for the imagined stability of the past. Bede records that Cenwalh, whose reign saw the Gewissae expand west even as they retreated south, was 'tormented by the many grave disasters inflicted most savagely on his kingdom by the enemy' — predominantly the Mercians — until his death in 672.[73] For the ten years following Cenwalh's death, according to Bede, the territory of Wessex was ruled by a number of sub-kings, although he does not identify them.[74] The *Chronicle*, meanwhile, states that Cenwalh was succeeded for one year (672–73) by his widow Seaxburg, who was followed by a distant cousin named Æscwine (674–76), who was in turn succeeded by Cenwalh's brother Centwine (r. 676–85/86).[75] Of these figures, Centwine alone is independently recorded by Aldhelm (*c*. 640–709/10) as a king who 'ruled the realm of the Saxons by right', a description that appears to conflict with Bede's testimony (derived from Bishop Daniel of Winchester) of a divided kingdom.[76] This apparent conflict between sources may itself be a symptom of the unsettled political situation in Wessex, which, with its various tribal groupings, *regiones*, sub-kings, and underlings, had never been truly united under a single strong ruler.[77] Centwine's nine-year reign, if Aldhelm's reference to him proves that he was dominant in the west country, need not rule

---

[73] '[G]rauissimis regni sui damnis saepissime ab hostibus adflictus': *HE*, III. 7, pp. 236–37.

[74] *HE*, IV. 12, pp. 368–69.

[75] *ASC*, p. 31.

[76] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 68. Aldhelm's reference to Centwine is from his poem celebrating the constuction of a church by Bugga, Centwine's daughter, *c*. 690: 'Hoc templum Bugge pulchro molimine structum | Nobilis erexit Centvvini filia regis, | Qui prius imperium Saxonum rite regebat' (*Carmina ecclesiastica*, p. 14, ll. 1–3).

[77] Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 64–66; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 66–67.

out the existence of equal or subordinate rulers in other parts of Wessex.[78] The *Chronicle*, at least, credits Æscwine with successfully defending Wessex against a Mercian invasion in 675.[79]

Thus Boniface was born and grew to maturity during a period when the West Saxon elite was undergoing a complex process of self-assertion and definition. This process was paralleled in other contemporary Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, as we can see from the array of similar *adventus* myths that repeat the motif of a single *gens* descended from shipbourne adventurers who had originated on the Continent.[80] In the 660s and 670s it would have been especially important for the new Saxon lords of the western frontier to maintain a cohesive group identity in the face of the numerically superior Britons, and the knot that came to hold the disparate Saxon families together was the myth of Cerdic's *adventus* and his origin in Germania. Boniface's parents were not only the inheritors of this tradition, but the embodiment of it; they spoke the Saxon tongue, language being one potential ethnic signifier at this time,[81] and they were, like their legendary ancestors, the victorious masters of the Britons. Traditions of the past echoed and justified the conditions of the present.

By the time Boniface was a teenager in the Saxon monastery of Exeter, the notion of a basic ethnic division within Wessex between Saxons and Britons had been codified in the law code of King Ine, written 688x93.[82] This code is unique

---

[78] See Kirby, 'Problems', pp. 15–19.

[79] *ASC*, p. 31.

[80] On this and the general development of Anglo-Saxon identity, see Yorke, 'Anglo-Saxon Origin Legends'; P. Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. by P. Wormald, D. Bullough, and R. Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 99–129; P. Wormald, '*Engla Lond*: The Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 7 (1994), 1–24; N. Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Yale University Press, 1989); J. Hines, 'The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in History and Archaeology*, 7 (1994), 49–59; Pohl, 'Ethnic Names'; J. Moreland, 'Ethnicity, Power and the English', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrell, pp. 23–51; P. Bartholemew, 'Continental Connections: Angles, Saxons and Others in Bede and in Procopius', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13 (2006), 19–30; Kleinschmidt, 'Geuissae and Bede'.

[81] Bede, at least, treated language as a defining feature of each of the four *gentes* living in Britain: *HE*, I. 1, pp. 16–17. See Hines, 'Becoming of the English', p. 51.

[82] Ine's laws survive only as an addition to Alfred's late ninth-century Law Code in the manuscript of the Parker Chronicle, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, fols 38[r]–57[r]. The facsimile edition is *The Parker Chronicle and Laws (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS.*

among surviving Anglo-Saxon law codes for its distinction between the relative legal status of Britons (*wealas*) and Saxons (*englisc*),[83] a distinction that arose from a peculiar historical context: the recent annexation of territory which, while predominantly populated by Britons, was also suitable for a degree of Saxon settlement.[84] The result was a considerable area, perhaps comprising much of modern Devon, Somerset, and Dorset, within which two ethnic groups lived side by side, distinguished by language, culture, and religious custom. The superior status of the Saxons was reinforced by the memory of recent conquests and eventually made explicit in Ine's laws, at least with regard to *wergeld*, the blood money payable in the event of unlawful killing, which treated a Saxon's life as worth between two and five times that of a Briton of equivalent social status.[85]

---

*173*): *A Facsimile*, ed. by R. Flower and H. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1941). The standard critical edition is *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by F. Liebermann, 2 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16), I, 88–123. An English translation is in *English Historical Documents*, ed. by David C. Douglas, I: *500–1042*, ed. and trans. by D. Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 398–407. See *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. by F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 36–61, for an edition of the Old English laws with facing English translation. On dating, see also Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 72–73; L. M. Alexander, 'The Legal Status of the Native Britons in Late Seventh-Century Wessex as Reflected by the Law Code of Ine', *Haskins Society Journal*, 7 (1995), 31–38 (p. 31); P. Wormald, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London: Hambledon, 1999), pp. 165–78.

[83] This text contains the earliest appearance of the Old English term *wealh*. M. L. Faull, 'The Semantic Development of Old English Wealh', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s., 8 (1975), 20–44 (p. 20). It is unclear why *englisc* was used in the law code to refer to West Saxons. The terms *Angle* and *Saxon* often appear to be ambiguous or interchangeable in eighth-century texts; St Boniface referred to himself as being 'of the stock and race of the Angles' (de stirpe et prosapia Anglorum) when trying to enlist insular support for the conversion of the Continental Saxons (Tangl, ep. 46, p. 74, l. 25), while another West Saxon missionary referred to the Continental Saxons as 'our people' ('in regione gentis nostrae, id est Saxanorum'; ibid, ep. 137, p. 276, ll. 25–26). A similar lack of a clear distinction can be seen across other eighth-century sources. See Pohl, 'Ethnic Names', p. 20. Bryan Ward-Perkins suggests that the term *englisc* was inserted into Ine's law code by a later editor, to whom it seemed more appropriate than an antiquated term for Saxons; alternatively, he suggests that it was the normal term for denoting an Old English speaker, whether Angle or Saxon, and that language was thus an important external characteristic used to determine ethnicity ('Why Did the Anglo-Saxons Not Become More British?', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 513–33 (p. 524)).

[84] D. Hooke, 'Anglo-Saxons in England', p. 79; Alexander, 'The Legal Status of the Native Britons', pp. 36–37; T. Charles-Edwards, 'Anglo-Saxon Kinship Revisited', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 171–210 (p. 199).

[85] Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chaps 23. 3, 24. 2, 32 (I, 100–03).

Such legal prejudice, which accorded the defeated, demoralized, and plague-wracked Britons a certain security, may also have been intended to encourage intermarriage at every social level.[86]

Religion came to be one crucial factor in British-Saxon relations on the western frontier, and the conflict between the British and West Saxon churches was fundamentally connected to political and ethnic divisions. Indeed, churchmen such as Bede and Aldhelm, the dominant figure of the late seventh-century West Saxon church, on occasion emphasized those very divisions. Aldhelm was as proud of his Germanic heritage as he was of his loyalty to Rome, as is evident in the words he wrote to his godson, King Aldfrið of Northumbria († 705), regarding his composition of the metrical treatise *De pedum regulis*: 'No one born of the offspring of our race and nourished in the cradles of a Germanic people has toiled so mightily in a pursuit of this sort.'[87] There can be little doubt that the young Boniface, born to a family of high-status pioneers at the western extremity of the Saxon frontier, surrounded by subjugated and potentially hostile Britons, was raised to believe in the truth and nobility of his Germanic ancestry. In Chapter 6 we shall see how the romantic myth of Continental origin imbued his self-identity, how he took it for granted that the Continental Saxons were his distant cousins, and how this very sense of kinship, whether misplaced or not, would ultimately drive his mission beyond its sustainable limits. Yet he was not only a Saxon but a Catholic Christian, and, considering his future career, the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the west country during his youth is of special importance to us here.

---

[86] Alexander, 'The Legal Status of the Native Britons', pp. 36–37, suggests that Ine was obliged to recognize British land rights both to discourage an uprising and to keep as much land in the depopulated western territories under cultivation as possible. Nothing in Ine's laws suggests that marriage between Britons and Saxons was legally obstructed or discouraged. It is important to place the laws in their historical and geographical context, and not to use their distinction between *wealas* and *englisc*, despite the fact that the distinction appears in no other Anglo-Saxon law code, as evidence for an apartheid-like system prevalent across Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as a whole: see, for example, Härke, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure', p. 149; M. G. Thomas, M. P. H. Stumpf, and H. Härke, 'Evidence for an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 273 ( July 2006), 2651–57 (p. 2654) (available online at <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/273/1601/2651. full.pdf+html>) [accessed 30 September 2009].

[87] *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Lapidge and M. Herren (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979), p. 45; 'Constat neminem nostrae stirpis prosapia genitum et Germanicae gentis cunabulis confotum in huiuscemodi negotio ante nostram mediocritatem tantopere desudasse': *Aldhelmi opera*, p. 202.

## *The Saxon Church*

### The Conversion of the Gewissae

As already mentioned, the Gewissae first appear in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* with the foundation of their bishopric in Dorchester-on-Thames in 635. The first bishop of Dorchester was the Italian Birinus, who baptized King Cynegils probably along with much of the royal family and Gewissan nobility. Bede portrays the event:

> When the king himself, having been catechized, was anointed at the baptismal font with his people, it happened that the most holy and victorious King Oswald of Northumbria was present. He greeted Cynegils as he came down from the font, and immediately offered him a most delightful alliance, pleasing to God: Cynegils was to accept Oswald's daughter in marriage, and Oswald accepted Cynegils as his son dedicated to God.[88]

Thus Cynegils sealed an alliance with Northumbria by becoming Oswald's son-in-law and godson at the same time. The alliance was above all directed against their common foe of Mercia, but, as we have seen, the harmony of Bede's baptismal scene would not last long. The fact that Cynegil's son Cenwalh at first rejected baptism, and became Christian only after the Mercian king forced him into exile in East Anglia, demonstrates how faltering were the church's early steps into the Gewissan court. Cenwalh's relationship with the church would remain troubled. According to Bede, after Cenwalh regained the kingdom he invited the Frankish bishop Agilbert to assume the see of Dorchester, only to become 'weary of the bishop's foreign speech' (pertaesus barbarae loquellae) and grant the new Gewissan bishopric of Winchester to the Saxon Wini in 662. Agilbert, deeply offended, returned to Gaul, while Wini eventually also fell out of Cenwalh's favour and fled to Mercia in 666, leaving the West Saxons without a bishop.[89]

Bede's account, derived from his contacts in Canterbury or Winchester, is frank but tantalizingly brief. Whatever the real reasons for the departures of Agilbert and Wini, and however they related to Cenwalh's political troubles, it is clear that ecclesiastical and secular relations in the Gewissan territories were far

---

[88] '[C]um rex ipse cathecizatus, fonte baptismi cum sua gente ablueretur, contigit tunc temporis sanctissimum ac uictoriosissimum regem Nordanhymbrorum Osualdum adfuisse, eumque de lauacro exeuntem suscepisse, ac pulcherrimo prorsus et Deo digno consortio, cuius erat filiam accepturus in coniugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dedicatum sibi accepit in filium': *HE*, III. 7, pp. 232–33.

[89] *HE*, III. 7, pp. 234–35.

from harmonious during the 650s and 660s. This appears to have changed somewhat over the following decades. By 670 Cenwalh had achieved some degree of reconciliation with the repatriated Agilbert, who agreed to send his nephew Leuthere from Gaul to assume the see of Winchester,[90] Dorchester by this time having been finally lost to Mercia. Boniface was born during this time of relative stability in the Gewissan church. In 676 Leuthere died and was succeeded by Haeddi, and he in turn by Daniel in 705/06. At about the same time as Daniel became bishop of Winchester, King Ine instituted Aldhelm as bishop of the western territories, with his episcopal seat at Sherborne.[91] Ine also produced his law code in close cooperation with the bishops of London and Winchester between 688 and 693, by which time ecclesiastical regulation, at least to some official degree, had become a royal concern.[92]

## Relations with the British Church

We shall return to Ine's reign and his relationship with the church later in this chapter. The first important point here is that the Gewissan/West Saxon rulers and their bishops gradually came to recognize their shared interests and work ever more closely together from 670 onwards. The second point is the simple reminder that while Bede effectively denied the British church any part in his history of the Anglo-Saxon church except that of antagonist,[93] the situation in late seventh-century Wessex was rather more complicated than this. When Cenwalh installed Bishop Wini at Winchester in 662, four years had passed since the Gewissan victory at Peonnan and a only year since their victory at Posentesbyrig, events that had gained the Saxons extensive British territory in the west. The British church was already well established in these areas, as Theresa Hall has argued in the case of Dorset, where the major Saxon churches of Sherborne, Shaftesbury, and

[90] *HE*, III. 7, pp. 236–37.

[91] *HE*, V. 18, pp. 514–15. Bede states only that Aldhelm received one bishopric after the West Saxon see was divided into two by Ine, while the *Chronicle*, *ASC*, p. 33, records that Aldhelm was bishop 'by the western wood' (be westan wuda biscep), referring to Penselwood, which is some 15 kilometres east of Sherborne. The earliest direct identification of Aldhelm's episcopal seat with Sherborne is by William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), I, 562–63 (V. 223. 7).

[92] See below, pp. 97–100.

[93] Blair, *Church*, pp. 28–29.

Wareham appear to have had British predecessors.[94] Exeter in Devon, home to a Christian community and possibly bishop during the Roman period, was probably also the site of a British church.[95]

Lack of evidence leaves us in great uncertainty as to the relations between these British churches and their new Saxon rulers. On the one hand, Yorke suggests that the region of northern Wiltshire, the southern part of the kingdom of the Hwicce, came under Saxon rule through a relatively peaceful process, the high rate of surviving British place-names perhaps reflecting a greater degree of continuity in landholding here than elsewhere in the west.[96] The lack of known Saxon mound burials in northern Wiltshire — a mere four, compared with more than two dozen in the south[97] — could also indicate that the symbolic contest over control of the landscape was less intense in this region. Finally, the most important contemporary church in the area, Malmesbury, was the relatively recent foundation of an Irishman named Máeldub, who continued to be honoured by the Saxon community after his death.[98] This strongly suggests that Máeldub was a friend to the Saxon church. He may even have founded his monastery with Gewissan support after their annexation of the area, going on to assist in the reform of the local British church.

The little evidence we have paints a rather different picture in the later counties of Dorset, Somerset, and Devon, which were in large part subject to the kingdom of Dumnonia. Southern Wiltshire, as we have seen, was the focus of the Saxon custom of furnished mound burials throughout the seventh century, and the battles of Peonnan in 658 and Posentesbyrig in 661 clearly relate to violent Saxon expansion from this region into the west. Given this context, it would not be surprising if relations between the Saxon and British churches were more fraught here than in the north. The West Saxon episcopal church of Sherborne,

---

[94] Hall, *Minster Churches*, p. 83.

[95] Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 153–58.

[96] B. Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections', in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, ed. by K. Barker and N. Brooks (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010).

[97] See Pollington, *Anglo-Saxon Burial Mounds*, pp. 178–94.

[98] This is evident in the place-name Malmesbury, *Maildubi urbem* according to Bede (*HE*, v. 18, pp. 514–15) and *Maldubia civitate* according to a correspondent of Lul (Tangl, ep. 135, p. 274, l. 7), which itself preserves his memory, along with Máeldub's apparent presence in a tenth-century list of abbots and other figures venerated by the Malmesbury community. See Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections'.

founded in 705/06, appears to have been intended to eclipse the earlier British church of Lanprobus, believed to have been situated 1.2 kilometres away, and failed to perpetuate its name, location or memory.[99] The existence of Lanprobus, in fact, is known only because of a fourteenth-century tradition according to which King Cenwalh († 672) granted a place by this name along with one hundred hides to the Saxon church at Sherborne.[100] Although we cannot know for certain how Cenwalh came to own Lanprobus and its extensive property in the first place, it seems plausible that he confiscated the church's property and possibly expelled its uncooperative clergy following his military success. This was, after all, precisely the means by which numerous British *loca sancta* came into the hands of St Wilfrid in Northumbria around the same time.[101]

Yet the Southumbrian Anglo-Saxon church appears to have been hard hit by the plague of 664,[102] and the Gewissan rulers would have been in no condition to replace an entire British ecclesiastical hierarchy even had they wanted to. For some years, therefore, a large part of the territory claimed by the Gewissae would have been dominated by British clerics, both those willing to cooperate with the Saxon church and those who were not. These must have included the two British bishops who, according to Bede, assisted Wini in the consecration of Bishop Chad in 665.[103] Whatever the nature of British-Saxon cooperation involved in this event — we do not know, for instance, that the British bishops in question were given much of a choice by their new Saxon rulers — it was not allowed to set a precedent. In 669, Theodore of Tarsus arrived from Rome as the new archbishop of Canterbury, and immediately undertook a general survey and reform of the church. Among his first directions was that Chad be reconsecrated by canonically

---

[99] On the foundation of the bishopric of Sherborne and its relationship to the church of Lanprobus, see H. P. R. Finberg, *Lucerna* (London: Macmillan, 1964), pp. 95–115; L. J. Keen, 'The Towns of Dorset', in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. by J. Haslam (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), pp. 203–47 (pp. 209–12); K. Barker, 'Sherborne in Dorset: An Early Ecclesiastical Settlement and its Estate', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 3 (1984), 1–33; *Charters of Sherborne*, ed. by M. A. O'Donovan, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 84–88; Faith, *English Peasantry*, pp. 18–22; Hall, *Minster Churches*, p. 11; M. Grimmer, 'British Christian Continuity in Anglo-Saxon England: The Case of Sherborne/*Lanprobi*', *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 1 (2005), 51–64.

[100] Hall, *Minster Churches*, p. 11.

[101] Stephen of Ripon, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), chap. 17, pp. 36–37.

[102] Maddicott, 'Plague in Seventh-Century England', pp. 9–16.

[103] *HE*, III. 28, pp. 316–17.

ordained, non-British bishops.[104] This was to set the tone for the coming decades, a period which, as Blair remarks, saw the rise of a 'perhaps less tolerant religious-political world'.[105]

## The Struggle for Orthodoxy

Bede looked back on Theodore's archiepiscopate as a golden age for the Anglo-Saxon church as a whole,[106] and we must be wary of this when considering it, but it is nonetheless difficult to overstate the degree of Theodore's influence in Wessex between 669 and his death in 690. Among the most important events was the foundation of his assistant Hadrian's school in Canterbury, which introduced a programme of advanced study, including Greek, astronomy, Roman law, and metrics, previously unknown in Britain or Ireland.[107] It is especially significant that Aldhelm was one early student at the Canterbury school in the early 670s.[108] Aldhelm, born to a noble Saxon family *c.* 640, appears to have spent some years under Irish tuition before he moved to the school at Canterbury,[109] which deeply influenced his attitudes towards learning and orthodoxy and left him a determined champion of Roman Christianity.

As well as being an immensely capable scholar,[110] Aldhelm was sufficiently familiar with the British church to lead the reform of its institutions which now found themselves in Gewissan territory. After the Council of Hertford in 672,

---

[104] *HE*, IV. 2, pp. 334–35.

[105] Blair, *Church*, p. 30.

[106] *HE*, IV. 2, pp. 332–37.

[107] M. Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 15 (1986), 45–72; V. Law, 'The Study of Latin Grammar in Eighth-Century Southumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 12 (1983), 43–71.

[108] On Aldhelm and his works, see *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. Ehwald; *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, ed. and trans. by Lapidge and Herren; *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE, 8 (1994); *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, ed. by K. Barker and N. Brooks (Oxford: Oxbow, forthcoming); M. Lapidge, 'The Career of Aldhelm', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36 (2007), 15–69.

[109] Whether Aldhelm received his early instruction in Ireland itself, or merely through Irish monks, is unclear, although Yorke leans towards the former. Yorke, 'Alhelm's Irish and British Connections'.

[110] Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, especially pp. 281–83.

Aldhelm wrote a letter of admonition to King Geraint of Dumnonia, the British kingdom that had borne the brunt of Gewissan expansion for over a decade, urging his church to accept the authority of Rome — and more immediately, of course, of Canterbury.[111] In material terms, Aldhelm, representing the Roman party, condemned the British method of calculating the date of Easter, the incorrect form of tonsure used by British monks, and decried the particular hostility of Dyfed monks towards their Saxon counterparts.[112] This last complaint may be related to the numerous Saxon monks who had long journeyed to Ireland for purposes of study or exile,[113] and were accustomed to stop along the Dyfed coast en route; if so, the Dyfed church's refusal to admit Saxon clerics into their communion may well have been a direct — and perhaps understandable — protest against the recent Gewissan annexation of Dumnonian territory and appropriation of British churches. Any British clerics who had been expelled from these churches may have ended up as refugees in Dumnonia or Dyfed, and one might sympathize with their reluctance to treat Saxon pilgrims charitably in such a situation.

It is interesting to note that Bede refers to Aldhelm's letter, or to a longer text that Aldhelm wrote to the same purpose, and claims that 'by means of this book he led many of those Britons who were subject to the West Saxons to adopt the Catholic celebration of the Easter of the Lord'.[114] King Geraint, in other words, was deaf to Aldhelm's admonitions, whose success was limited to Saxon-controlled territory. This process of reform would have been directed in part from the church of Malmesbury, where Aldhelm was appointed abbot from 680 at the latest,[115] but other centres no doubt included the important churches of Shaftesbury, Sherborne, and Exeter. The atmosphere of late seventh-century Wessex, as Hall describes it, was 'saturated with the necessity to conform to Roman orthodoxy'.[116] Aldhelm's reform programme built upon the dramatic expansion of the Gewissae into British territory, and the Gewissan royal family

---

[111] Aldhelm, *Epistolae*, ep. 4, pp. 482–85.

[112] Aldhelm, *Epistolae*, ep. 4, p. 482, l. 20, to p. 484, l. 21.

[113] In one of his letters, Aldhelm attempted to discourage the monk Wihtfrith from a planned pilgrimage to Ireland (Aldhelm, *Epistolae*, ep. 3, pp. 479–80).

[114] '[M]ultosque eorum, qui Occidentalibus Saxonibus subditi erant Brettones, ad catholicam dominici paschae celebrationem huius lectione perduxit': *HE*, v. 18, pp. 514–15.

[115] William of Malmesbury claims that Alhelm was abbot from 675, but the charter evidence for his abbacy dates only from 680. Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections'.

[116] Hall, *Minster Churches*, p. 83.

were the church's greatest patrons. His poems celebrated the piety and munificence of the Saxon elite, who consolidated their hold on the west through the building of new churches. He travelled extensively throughout British-speaking territory and wrote a poem describing a journey from Cornwall, which was still part of the independent kingdom of Dumnonia, into Devon or Dorset.[117] Such visitations, foreshadowing Boniface's later activity on the Continent, would have been vital in both his reform and diplomatic efforts.

## Monastic Education

Considering this context, we do not need to dig deep to find the roots of Boniface's later concern for orthodoxy and orthopraxy according to the teachings of the Roman Church. Being born in 675 or slightly earlier, his parents would have entrusted him to Abbot Wulfhard of Exeter around the time Aldhelm assumed the abbacy of Malmesbury and embarked on his major reform campaign of British churches and clergy. Boniface's noble birth ensured that his oblation was a social and political as well as spiritual act on the part of his parents, who may have anticipated that their young son would eventually go on to assume a prominent role in the West Saxon ecclesiastical hierarchy.[118] The complete abandonment of worldly ties upon entry into the monastery, for children as well as for adults, was a fantasy. The social networks that placed a child in a monastery continued to function, and the child continued to fulfil a role within them. Indeed, one of the most distinctive features of the later Bonifatian mission is the consanguinity of its principal members, and Barbara Yorke is surely correct to regard this as a natural extension of similar circumstances in the Wessex of Boniface's youth.[119]

We know very little about the frontier monastic community at Exeter except for the unsurprising fact that its teaching resources were inferior to those of Nursling in central Wessex, where Boniface transferred as a young man in order

---

[117] Aldhelm, *Carmina rhythmica*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 517–37 (pp. 524–28).

[118] Yorke, 'The Insular Background', p. 25, suggests that Boniface was related to Abbot Wynbert of Nursling, and that this was one reason why he was expected to assume the abbacy following Wynbert's death. *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 5, p. 18, l. 4, to p. 20, l. 9.

[119] Yorke, 'The Insular Background', pp. 27–29. See also M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 46–55; S. Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 140–46.

to further his studies.[120] Willibald also stated that Boniface followed the Rule of St Benedict from his earliest years,[121] but how prominent this rule was in Britain and Western Europe before the Carolingian reforms of the late eighth century, notwithstanding Boniface's own enthusiastic promotion of it during his mission, is a matter of extended debate among historians.[122] There is not much to add to Holdsworth's conclusion that Exeter and Nursling appear to have been communities where the Rule of St Benedict 'was sometimes tempered and sometimes strengthened with other ways', possibly including the Rule of St Columbanus.[123]

Nothing at all has survived of the earliest Saxon monastic precinct at Exeter, although it may have lain in the vicinity of the present cathedral, founded in the eleventh century. We cannot therefore determine its late seventh-century appearance beyond assuming that it included the necessary monastic buildings of oratory, refectory, dormitories, kitchen, and perhaps guest lodgings, workshops, and other ancillary structures. There would have been ample building material available within the city, the former Roman tribal capital of Isca Dumnoniorum, making very likely the extensive use of stone within the precinct. Certainly, when the young Boniface was led into the monastic precinct at Exeter he was entering a space utterly unlike the world he had thus far inhabited, even if his immature mind was not yet able to grasp the concepts involved. Rosemary Cramp, with reference to Wearmouth and Jarrow, describes the inevitable 'cultural and social dislocation for any boy who left his local village with its timber houses and became an inmate in the splendid stone buildings' of the monastic community.[124]

---

[120] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 2, p. 9, ll. 3–11.

[121] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 2, p. 10, ll. 7–16.

[122] See C. Holdsworth, 'Boniface the Monk', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 49–67 (pp. 54–57); P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. by G. Bonner (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 141–69 (p. 145); Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 48–60; de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*, p. 24; M. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 128–29; M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, AD 300–800* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), pp. 70–71; A. Diem, *Das monastische Experiment: Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens* (Münster: Lit, 2005), especially pp. 131–45.

[123] Holdsworth, 'Boniface the Monk', p. 57.

[124] R. Cramp, 'Monkwearmouth and Jarrow: The Archaeological Evidence', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. by Bonner, pp. 5–18 (p. 17).

Once inside the precinct of Exeter, Boniface became the member of a community which in theory held all material goods in common,[125] and which defined itself largely by its physical, if not social, separation from the outside world. Albrecht Diem has identified three main factors determining the organization of early medieval monastic communities: the control of space, in particular enforcing strict external-internal boundaries; the control of speech (careless or false speech being among the gravest of sins); and the continual recognition and confession of transgressions.[126] The battle was thus waged on two fronts, isolation protecting the community against corruption from without, silence and regular confession containing and purging corruption within. The monastery was an embattled island in a marshy world of sin, where, according to Aldhelm's own elaborate verses, the chanting *servi Dei* struggled on behalf of the sinful world to win God's enduring grace:

> We brothers praise God with unified voice;
> The sisters praise too, abounding in song:
> Hymns and psalms and fitting response
> We offer beneath the shell of the temple.[127]

[125] The extent to which private property was in reality permitted among Anglo-Saxon monastic communities of this period is unclear. P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 117–18, 240, mentions two cases of monks who appear to have owned dependents, including the case of a monk at Much Wenlock who had held a female dependent in common with his lay brother (Tangl, ep. 10, p. 13, ll. 28–36), and Lul himself, who attempted to have two freedmen formerly owned by him and his father directed to join him in Germania (Tangl, ep. 49. p. 79, l. 20, to p. 80, l. 4). It is not clear, however, that either the monk from Much Wenlock or Lul actually owned their dependents after they took orders, and the fact that they 'shared' ownership with a non-religious family member — this perhaps being one way of circumventing the monastic ban on private property — also complicates the matter. On another occasion one of Lul's messengers, the priest Wigberht, found himself in a dilemma when his family began pressuring him to accept his inheritance of land and goods rather than return to the mission in Germania. His plea for guidance from Lul, along with his family's threat that they would alienate his inheritance if he did not accept it, makes it clear that the two options were fundamentally incompatible. Tangl, ep. 138, p. 277, l. 30, to p. 278, l. 11.

[126] Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, pp. 332–38.

[127] 'Fratres concordi laudemus uoce | Tonantem Cantibus et crebris conclamet turba sororem: | Ymnos ac psalmos et responsoria | Congrua promamus subter testudine templi': Aldhelm, *Carmina ecclesiastica*, no. 3, ll. 50–58, pp. 16–17.

Aldhelm's evocation of the *testudo* is apt here, reminding his West Saxon audience, which doubtless included Boniface, at once of the shield of prayer which could protect humanity from the 'poisoned darts of the hidden enemy'[128] and the hull of the heavenly ship which the lofty roof of the church basilica resembled.[129]

However strange and unfriendly the monastic environment must have seemed to the new oblate, it was to become Boniface's spiritual and emotional refuge from the tempestuous seas of the world. While at the Roman synods of 737/38, he wrote a letter to his monks in Germania promising his swift return,[130] in 751 he begged the Pope to release him from his bishopric at Mainz so that he might retire to Fulda, his most dear monastic foundation, and at Fulda, according to his wishes, he was eventually laid to rest in anticipation of Judgement Day.[131] When we picture a secular world of violent feuds, social turbulence, and endemic warfare, much of which Boniface must have experienced at first hand especially after becoming a missionary, his desire to retreat from it becomes understandable. He was a man much in the world during his later years, but in his heart he always longed for the protective womb of the monastery. 'Many are the trials of the righteous', ran one of his favourite psalms, 'but the Lord delivers them from them all. The Lord protects every one of their bones: not one of them will be broken.'[132] God's protection summoned through the Psalms: the roof of the church, the barred gates of the monastic precinct, the *testudo* of prayer; within, *stabilitas*, purity and protection; without, *instabilitas* and the invisible, piercing darts of Satan.

The roots of this emotional and spiritual security sank deep into the soil of the precinct, fed by the steady, rhythmic pulse of monastic life. Diem has explored at length the shift from the Desert Fathers' ideal of personal salvation obtained through long, introspective struggles in the wilderness to the early medieval notion of monasteries as 'places of institutionalized sanctity where monks and

---

[128] '[H]ostis occulti uenenata iacula', from Tangl, ep. 29, p. 53, l. 11, a letter of Leoba to Boniface.

[129] On Boniface's use of the motif of the Ship of the Church in his letters, see Chapter 6, pp. 253–57, below.

[130] Tangl, ep. 41, p. 66.

[131] 'In quo loco cum consensu pietatis vestrae proposui aliquantulum vel paucis diebus fessum senectute corpus requiescendo recuperare et post morten iacere': Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 29–31.

[132] '[M]ultae tribulationes justorum et de omnibus his liberabit eos Dominus custodit Dominus omnia ossa eorum unum ex his non conteretur': Psalms 33. 20–21. Boniface quoted the passage in Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, l. 26; ep. 67, p. 140, ll. 23–24; ep. 94, p. 215, ll. 3–5.

nuns prayed for the earthly well-being and the eternal salvation of the founders and their families'.[133] This shift made the individual utterly subservient to the whole. Whereas the child oblate was supposed to be purity personified, the ideal monastic community by necessity followed a continual cycle of confession and purification. Even the best monastery was a man-made ship of rotten strakes and crooked rivets that required daily proofing and bailing.

This was achieved through a process that Anthony Giddens has called the '"reversible time" of day-to-day routine conduct'.[134] Whereas the Rule of St Benedict is relatively uninterested in the spatial arrangement of the monastery so long as it was sufficiently secluded from the outside world, time was to be arranged with extreme care. Monastic time was not linear, but regressive, forever recycling the experience of the previous day, the previous week, the previous year. Seven times during the day the monks would gather to sing a string of psalms and antiphons, and once during the night.[135] During the day offices and activities, the body of monks or nuns behaved as a harmonious organic whole, praying and eating in unison, dispersing and regathering. The night office and the pre-dawn matins office are especially interesting, for they represent an early, tentative step in what sociologists have termed the 'colonization' of the night.[136] Before the advent of cheap electric lighting the night was a formidable constraint on human activity, the only natural phenomenon that forced Benedict to compromise his strict regularization of the offices by outlining seasonal variations to the rule. It was a time of figurative and spiritual as well as literal darkness. Boniface would later see himself as a torch bearer carrying the lamp of Christ to the dark corners of pagan Germania,[137] and this imagery is especially potent when we recall the fearsome nature of night, friend only to the bandit and thief, in a time of lawlessness and feud:

---

[133] A. Diem, 'Encounters between Monks and Demons in Latin Texts of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus, and T. Hofstra, Germania Latina, 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 51–67 (p. 67).

[134] A. Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984), p. 136. Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 38–42, has discussed the extent to which Anglo-Saxon monasteries can be regarded as 'total institutions'.

[135] Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. and trans. by J. McCann (London: Burns & Oates, 1952), chaps 8–18, pp. 48–67.

[136] M. Melbin, 'The Colonisation of Time', in *Human Activity and Time Geography*, ed. by T. Carlstein, D. Parkes, and N. Thrift (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), pp. 100–13 (p. 100).

[137] See Chapter 6, pp. 250–51, below.

> The blooming body of the earth bears me, black,
> And from my barren womb I beget nothing fruitful,
> Though seers, singing the song of the Furies,
> Invoke the infernal offspring to bring forth.
> No substance of my certain birth remains,
> But that I embrace one fourth of the world in gloom.
> She is hateful to me who is a friend to all,
> Who lights the world, the Titanian torch of Phoebus;
> But fearsome bandits ought forever to love me,
> Those whom I yearn to cloak in my shadowy lap.[138]

Once the sharp young Boniface, sitting with tablet and pen, had picked his way through the brambles of Aldhelm's language, this riddle on the night would not have kept him baffled for long. He needed only recall the hundreds of times he had been woken from his own bed before sunrise, standing in the dim candlelight of the oratory, the drowsy lips of the brethren reciting psalm after psalm, while outside was the cold night, domain of crying beasts and silent robbers, and the eternal wind howling down from the barren hills of Dartmoor.

Just as the monk existed within a strictly defined framework of time and space, so he was expected to establish control over the frame of his own body. In a period when all social communication involved the physical presence of the correspondents involved or their agents, one's demeanour was of especial importance.[139] Body language was performed, noticed, and read, consciously and unconsciously. Those able to communicate through letters, such as Boniface's protégé and successor Lul, on occasion claimed to be as handicapped by the medium as they were enabled: 'If we were actually present before you on bended knee and with floods of tears, we trust that our request would be granted; so now, in our absence, we humbly beg the same favour from you.'[140] Such behaviour was not mere

---

[138] 'Florida me genuit nigrantem corpore tellus | Et nil fecundum stereli de viscere promo, | Quamvis Eumenidum narrantes carmine vates | Tartaream partu testentur gignere prolem. |Nulla mihi constat certi substantia partus, | Sed modo quadratum complector caerula mundum. | Est inimica mihi, quae cunctis constat amica, | Saecula dum lustrat, lampas Titania Phoebi; | Diri latrones me semper amare solebant, | Quos gremio tectos nitor defendere fusco': Aldhelm, *De metris et enigmatibus et pedum regulis*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 33–204 (pp. 143–44).

[139] Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, pp. 122–23.

[140] *The Letters of St Boniface*, p. 55, trans. by Emerton; 'Hoc uero, si corporibus praesenti fuissemus, flexis genarum poblitibus et salsis lacrimarum imbribus rogitantes diligenti petitione speramus posse inpetrari; et nunc absentes hoc idem obnixis precibus postulamus': Tangl, ep. 49,

melodrama — although Lul was prone to that too — but a culturally embedded form of social discourse.[141] It was considered proper for the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow to weep, fall to the ground, and grasp the feet of their beloved abbot when he tried to leave for Rome for the last time,[142] and Bede also found it completely plausible that Augustine's failure to rise from his seat when meeting the British bishops in 603, ruining any prospect of an amicable debate, was a root cause of one hundred years of hatred and warfare.[143] One of Boniface's chief frustrations would be dealing with those strutting, sword-waving Frankish priests who had been canonically ordained yet continued to bear themselves like retainers or secular lords.[144]

In theory not even the body of the monk was his own property since he, or his parents, had surrendered it along with his will to the service of God.[145] Yet this is only part of the story, as de Jong has discussed, for in practice a monk was expected to obtain mastery of the body he did not own, to suppress and defeat its involuntary inclinations, and bear it in a manner which made manifest his inner humility and guilt:[146]

> Monks should display 'continence of body' (*continentia corporis*), displaying their humility by going about with a bowed head. If tasks such as the pruning of high vines made this temporarily impossible, a monk should remain mentally *incurvatus* all the same. In other words, those living within the *claustrum* had a code of behaviour diametrically opposed to that which prevailed in the outside world. Monastic deportment was ruled by self-control and display of humility, while the laiety — at least in the eyes of the monks — were characterized by loudness, unbounded anger or joy and an easily offended sense of honour.[147]

---

p. 79, ll. 10–14. There is a distinct Aldhelmian flavour to Lul's choice of words. See Chapter 6, pp. 271–77, below.

[141] B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 1–31.

[142] Anon., *Vita Ceolfridi*, in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by C. Plummer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 388–404 (chap. 23, p. 396).

[143] *HE*, II. 2, pp. 138–39.

[144] One of the decrees of the Frankish synod of 742/43, the first major accomplishment of Boniface's reform efforts, forbade priests and deacons from dressing in the manner of laymen. Tangl, ep. 56, p. 101, ll. 12–17.

[145] Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of St Benedict*, chap. 58, pp. 132–33.

[146] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 137. 'De humilitate' is the longest chapter in the Rule of Benedict: Benedict of Nursia, *Rule of St Benedict*, chap. 7, pp. 46–49.

[147] De Jong, *In Samuel's Image*, p. 152.

Learning to dominate and control one's own body was a basic principle of monastic life. The body was a tool to perform the work of God, but it could just as easily be manipulated by Satan. It was thus the first and most important battleground for the monk, hosting a battle, moreover, which did not end until death itself, even in the cases of the most revered and pious churchmen and churchwomen.[148] When Boniface learned that Daniel of Winchester, his much-loved friend and former teacher, had gone blind in his old age, he offered comfort by saying that Daniel, like Didymus, had been blessed with blindness so that in his final days he could concentrate more fully on his inner spiritual well-being, undistracted by the corruption of the outside world.[149]

The purity of the community began with the body, and thus the purity of the whole was the responsibility of the individual monk. Fear of spiritual pollution was very real and had almost physical intensity. Those monks found guilty of transgressions were quarantined from their brethren until the abbot considered them to have been purged of all traces of sin; so strongly was this instilled in Boniface that in later years he would quarantine *himself* from clergy whom he considered morally or canonically unclean, refusing even to join them in holy communion.[150] This is where Diem's second and third measures of maintaining communal purity found their function. The principle of silence helped limit the danger of impious thoughts spreading among the brethren.[151] To prevent the seeds of the Devil from taking root in the first place, the mind was to be fortified by continual meditation on the Word of God, as the opening of the Book of Psalms commanded. The best advice Boniface could give to his pupil Nithard, a young monk who was considering abandoning his scriptural studies in 716/17, was just that: 'Remember the words of the Psalmist speaking of the happy man: "His will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night."'[152]

Even the thickest shield of prayer, though, was not without cracks. It was not enough merely to curtail speech and control thought, and nor could any monastic

---

[148] In early medieval hagiography, of course, the idealized notion of the incorruptible saint reigned supreme. See Diem, 'Encounters between Monks and Demons', especially pp. 64–67.

[149] Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, l. 21, to p. 132, l. 6.

[150] Tangl, ep. 63, p. 129, l. 4, to p. 130, l. 8.

[151] Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, pp. 334–36.

[152] 'Memor psalmigraphi de beato uiro sententiam proferentis: "In lege Domini fuit uoluntas eius et meditabitur die ac nocte"': Tangl, ep. 9, p. 5, ll. 31–33.

community possibly exist in total isolation from the world at large.[153] The in-evitability of pollution necessitated a cycle of confession and penance woven into the fabric of the daily offices and yearly feasts, augmented whenever particular faults or shortcomings were revealed.[154] Through this process the community acknowledged its collective faults, each monk relying on the prayers of his breth-ren for absolution. Like the sailors of a ship tossed on the stormy ocean, they lived or drowned together, and Boniface learned this lesson well in his early years. Yet knowing how to lead a chaste, studious, and holy life was no more constraining to Boniface than a sound knowledge of navigation was to a sea captain in the treacherous waters of the Channel, and he was not destined to spend the rest of his life confined within the bosom of the community at Exeter.

For most of Boniface's fellow monks, particularly those whose duties did not often require them to leave the precinct, their attention was turned always inwards and upwards: to the running and health of the community itself, and to the grace it sought to win from heaven on behalf of its patrons. Boniface, as a student of some talent, was permitted to transfer from the remote western border-lands to Nursling in his early twenties. When he became a teacher he was required to journey beyond Nursling to other monasteries and nunneries, and when ordained priest he would have had to move among the laiety as he had not done for many years, rediscovering the secular world he had lost as a child and seeing it through very different eyes. His experiences in central Wessex between the ages of about twenty and forty would finally set him on the path to Germania.

## Kingship in Wessex, 685–726

### King Cædwalla and Lessons from Recent History

We have already mentioned that after the death of Cenwalh in 672, Wessex — or the territory which would soon become known by that name — was ruled by a number of sub-kings for a period of ten years, among whom Centwine, the brother of Cenwalh, appears to have been dominant in the west. Just as Boniface was reaching his teenage years in the monastery of Exeter, the political landscape changed dramatically. Bede, obtaining his information from Bishop Daniel of

---

[153] Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 284.

[154] Diem, *Das monastische Experiment*, p. 337.

Winchester (bishop from *c.* 705 to 744),[155] related that in 685 an exiled prince of the Gewissae named Cædwalla invaded Sussex and killed King Æthelwalh, and shortly afterwards overcame his rivals to become the dominant king of Wessex.[156]

We do not know why Cædwalla was exiled, or by whom; we cannot even be sure precisely how he managed to come to power, or why he forsook it three years later. He may have had connections to western Wessex, as is suggested by the derivation of his name from British *Cadwallon* and perhaps also the praise accorded him by Aldhelm.[157] Both Bede and the *Chronicle* describe Cædwalla's reign as one of continual (and largely successful) conquest, during which he sub-jugated Essex, Sussex, the Isle of Wight, and Kent.[158] After receiving a mortal wound on the Isle of Wight — so reports Bede — Cædwalla resolved to realize his ambition of baptism in Rome, which he did during Lent 689 before dying there a few days later.[159] Following his abdication, power was assumed by Ine, his kinsman, who remained king of Wessex until 726.[160]

Here we shall focus on Bede's account of the conquest of the Isle of Wight by Cædwalla:

> After Cædwalla acquired the kingdom of the Gewissae, he also captured the Isle of Wight, which had until that time been entirely devoted to idolatry, and sought to exterminate all of the indigenous people with savage slaughter and to replace them with men from his own province. It is said that he swore an oath to donate a quarter of the island and his booty to Christ if he captured it, even though he was unbaptized.[161]

---

[155] Bede states that Daniel was his source for the history of the Isle of Wight in his *Praefatio*, *HE*, pp. 4–5. See D. P. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1966), 341–71 (p. 364).

[156] *HE*, IV. 15, pp. 380–81.

[157] In his poem on Bugga's church, Aldhelm portrays Cædwalla as Centwine's successor, praising his martial ability above all: 'Post hunc successit bello famosus et armis | Rex Caedvvalla, potens regni possessor et heres' (*Carmina ecclesiastica*, p. 15, ll. 17–18).

[158] *HE*, IV. 15–16, pp. 380–85.

[159] *HE*, V. 7, pp. 468–73. For further discussions of Cædwalla, see Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 69–70; Yorke, 'Jutes of Hampshire', pp. 89–90; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Seaby, 1990), pp. 137–39; R. Sharpe, 'King Ceadwalla's Roman Epitaph', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. by K. O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard, Toronto Old English Studies, 14, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), I, 171–93.

[160] *HE*, V. 7, pp. 472–73.

[161] 'Postquam ergo Caedualla regno potitus est Geuissorum, cepit et insulam Uectam, quae eatenus erat tota idolatriae dedita, ac stragica caede omnes indigenas exterminare, ac suae prouinciae homines pro his substituere contendit, uoto se obligans, quamuis necdum regeneratus, ut ferunt,

Map 3. The Winchester region *c.* 700.

Cædwalla donated the promised portion of the island to the Northumbrian bishop Wilfrid, who was evangelizing Sussex at this time and appears to have become closely involved with Cædwalla in his rise to power. It is unclear whether Bede's *omnes indigenas* refers to the population of Wight as a whole, or only those members of prominent families who posed a potential risk to Cædwalla's newly established rule. It appears that Cædwalla was at least determined to exterminate Wight's Jutish dynasty, for Bede relates a story about two Jutish princes who escaped from the island to the mainland only to be betrayed, captured, and brought before Cædwalla. A local abbot named Cynibert begged Cædwalla to allow him to baptize the boys before they were put to death, and Cædwalla consented.[162]

   We can leave the historicity of Bede's account to one side, and consider its significance as a story that was known in ecclesiastical circles in the Solent region in the early eighth century (see Map 3). The surviving version of the story is firmly rooted in the Solent landscape: Ad Lapidem, where the princes fled, is almost

---

in Christo, quia, si cepisset insulam, quartam partem eius simul et praedae Domino daret': *HE*, IV. 16, pp. 382–83.

   [162] *HE*, IV. 16, pp. 382–83.

certainly the hamlet of Stone on the Hampshire coast,[163] while Cynibert was the abbot of a monastery at Hreutford, modern Redbridge/Eling. These places are close to Winchester, but closer yet to Nursling, where Boniface studied and taught between 695x700 and 718. Given that Daniel of Winchester was Boniface's teacher and close friend during these years, we can be all but certain that Boniface knew the story well, no doubt in far more detail than the surviving version.

Boniface arrived in Nursling as a young man about ten years after Cædwalla's conquest of Wight. What lessons might he and his brethren have taken from this violent piece of recent history? Both Aldhelm and Stephen of Ripon in his *Vita sancti Wilfridi* (written in the second decade of the eighth century) depicted Cædwalla as a noble warrior king who was sympathetic to Christianity and ultimately embraced it.[164] Bede, and by implication Daniel of Winchester, presented a fuller and more balanced picture, and, unlike Stephen, did not shrink from relating the brutality of Cædwalla's conquests of Sussex and Wight. Even Bede, however, did not condemn the King, but rather used the violent years of his reign as a subtle contrast to his eventual burial in Rome wearing the white robes of baptism. The contrast is made clear in these lines from the epitaph raised above his tomb,[165] which Bede quoted in full, and which included the lines:

> Perceiving with eagerness the prize of life renewed,
> Converted, he converted his barbaric ferocity,
> And then, rejoicing, his name;
> Pope Sergius ordered that he be called Peter,
> So that the same father, at the font of rebirth, by the cleansing grace
>   of Christ
> Might speedily bring him, clothed in white, to the gates of Heaven.[166]

---

[163] Yorke, 'Jutes of Hampshire', p. 90, and Hase, 'Mother Churches', p. 45, *contra* the older tradition which identified *Ad Lapidem* with Stoneham, 12 kilometres south of Winchester. Geographically speaking, the identification with Stone is far more logical. In the tenth century, and hence possibly during the eighth, Stone was also in the *parochia* of Eling, site of the monastery ruled by the abbot who attempted to have the princes baptized.

[164] Stephen of Ripon, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, chap. 42, pp. 84–85. For Aldhelm's description, see his *Carmina ecclesiastica*, p. 15, ll. 17–18.

[165] For a discussion of this epitaph in its wider context of epigraphical transmission, see Sharpe, 'King Ceadwalla's Roman Epitaph'.

[166] 'Percipiensque alacer rediuiuae praemia uitae, | Barbaricam rabiem, nomen et inde suum | Conuersus conuertit ouans; | Petrumque uocari Sergius antistes iussit, ut ipse pater | Fonte renascentis, quem Christi gratia purgans | Protinus albatum uexit in arce poli': *HE*, v. 7, pp. 470–73.

Bede used Cædwalla, therefore, as an example of a king whose savagery was redeemed by abandonment of worldly glory in favour of Christ, and the fact that Cædwalla was baptized in Rome and died soon thereafter helped intensify the dramatic symbolism of his 'conversion'.[167] A lesson that West Saxon ecclesiastics might have drawn from the story is that members of the church had to be prepared to make compromises and exercise patience when dealing with the secular elite on whose support they depended. There is no evidence from the narratives of Bede or Stephen that Wilfrid had any moral objections to accepting land and property from a king known for his merciless nature. Furthermore, the fact that Abbot Cynibert had managed to baptize the two Jutish princes, but had either failed or not even attempted to save them from execution, demonstrated starkly the limited influence churchmen could have when confronted by a determined king with a political agenda of his own.[168]

At the start of the eighth century, then, the history of a close alliance between West Saxon church and king was scarcely a history at all, but a relatively recent development. As we have seen, Cynegils adopted Christianity when already king and Cenwalh refused to convert until he was forced into exile, while Centwine and Cædwalla received baptism only late in life.[169] Ine (r. 688–726) was the first West Saxon king to come to the throne as, and remain, an enthusiastic Christian.

---

[167] The topos of the king who relinquishes his rule in order to become a monk or pilgrim appears six times in Bede. See also his account of King Sigebert of East Anglia (*HE*, III. 18, pp. 266–69), Sebbi of Essex (*HE*, IV. 11, pp. 364–69), Ine of Wessex (*HE*, V. 7, pp. 472–73), Coenred of Mercia (*HE*, V. 19, pp. 516–17), and Offa of Essex (ibid.). Bede presents these instances of conversion from royal authority to the religious life as voluntary and motivated by personal piety, but there may well have been political motives behind many of them, and some may not have been entirely voluntary. See C. Stancliffe, 'The Kings Who Opted Out', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. by Wormald, Bullough, and Collins, pp. 154–76. David Pratt argues that monastic exile was not as effective a tool of political neutralization in Anglo-Saxon society as it was in the Frankish kingdoms: D. Pratt, 'The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 30 (2001), 39–90 (p. 53). On Frankish political uses of 'monastic exile', see M. de Jong, 'Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion and Honour in the Frankish Kingdoms', in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by M. de Jong, F. Theuws, and C. van Rhijn (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 291–328.

[168] This is assuming, of course, that Cynibert, Daniel or any other contemporary ecclesiastic would have necessarily disapproved of the slaughter of the Isle of Wight pagans. The fact that Stephen whitewashes Cædwalla's reign of such violence, however, may indicate that he was wary of associating Wilfrid with a ruler who had so much blood on his hands. See Sharpe, 'King Ceadwalla's Roman Epitaph', p. 171; Yorke, 'Jutes of Hampshire', p. 89.

[169] Aldhelm, *Carmina ecclesiastica*, p. 14, l. 1, to p. 15, l. 32.

For clerics such as Daniel of Winchester and Boniface, who had close dealings with the powerful secular elite of Wessex, the recent history of the Solent demonstrated that a degree of pragmatism was sometimes necessary for the survival of the church.

## The Reign of King Ine

Cædwalla's short but bloody rise to power had left him the undisputed leader of the newly coined 'West Saxons', and when Ine succeeded him to the throne in 688 he was able to build upon these secure foundations, consolidating the machinery of government and embarking on a policy of far closer cooperation with the church than any of his predecessors. He embodied, in Stenton's words, a 'new concept of kingship' among contemporary Anglo-Saxon rulers.[170] Like his predecessors he made numerous donations to the churches and monasteries of his realm,[171] but unlike them he also issued a law code, compiled 688x693, which bound church and king in a mutually beneficial partnership. In the preamble to the laws, Ine acknowledges the assistance of his father, who was evidently still alive at the time, along with two bishops, Haeddi of Winchester and Eorcenwald of London.[172]

The close cooperation of church and king is clear in Ine's laws, especially if we compare them with the Kentish law codes that were among the models adopted by Ine and his bishops. The Kentish kings granted their own bishops only limited influence in drawing up vernacular law. As Bede remarked with some pride, Æthelberht's first law, written before 616, outlined the compensation due for theft of church property;[173] but the church is otherwise not mentioned in Æthelberht's law code, while the later Kentish laws of Hlothere and Eadric do not mention the church at all.[174] In contrast, Ine's first five laws are concerned not only with protecting the interests of the church, but with regularizing its members and promoting the wider Christianization of the common people. He commanded that all monks follow their 'proper Rule' (*ryhtregol*) which, whatever 'proper' may mean in this instance, demonstrates a clear concern for

---

[170] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 73.

[171] There are fourteen such charters, S 238 to S 252, of varying authenticity, which cover the entire span of Ine's reign.

[172] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 88–89.

[173] *HE*, II. 5, pp. 150–51; for the standard edition of Æthelberht's law code, see *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 3–8.

[174] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 9–11.

monastic regulation.[175] All newborns were to be baptized within thirty days, suggesting that it was now taken for granted that most adults were already Christian.[176] Nobody, not even a slave, was to work on Sunday.[177] Church dues were to be paid annually.[178] Churches were to act as places of legal sanctuary.[179]

The extent to which these specific laws were enforced is of course a matter for debate.[180] According to the critical testimony of a mid-eighth-century monk who had a miraculous vision of the afterlife, it appears that Bishop Daniel of Winchester († 745) for some reason failed to ensure the baptism of numerous infants in his diocese.[181] Yet even if the laws were to some degree symbolic and could not be enforced to their full extent, they and the surviving charters of Ine's reign suggest the closeness of the relationship that he and the West Saxon church nurtured. Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* describes Ine convening and directly addressing a council of prominent churchmen on the occasion of a political crisis, which further illustrates the importance he placed on their support and counsel.[182]

Judging from the conspicuous silence of our (admittedly few) historical sources, it appears that Ine enjoyed relatively uncontested, peaceful control of his kingdom until about 710. Excavations in central Wessex have demonstrated that the region was prosperous, its fertile river valleys densely settled and farmed, its economy thriving, and its population relatively healthy and well fed.[183] Ine's laws

[175] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, chap. 1 (I, 88–89).

[176] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, chap. 2 (I, 90–91).

[177] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, chap. 3–3.1 (I, 90–91).

[178] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, chap. 4 (I, 90–91).

[179] *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, chap. 5–5.1 (I, 90–91).

[180] Wormald argued that the laws were written according to practical need, not as a mere symbol of royal rule, although this does not prove that they were successfully enforced (*Legal Culture*, pp. 192–94). See also M. P. Richards, 'The Manuscript Context of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions*, ed. by P. E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 171–92 (p. 174).

[181] An account of the unnamed monk's vision of Hell, which dates from between 757 and 786, survives in the correspondence of Lul: 'infantium numerosam multitudinem sub Danielo episcopo maxime sine baptismo morientium tristem et merentem aspexit' (Tangl, ep. 115, p. 249, ll. 7–8). See pp. 113–17, below, on the provision of pastoral care in the West Saxon heartlands.

[182] 'Regnante Ine Westsaxonum rege, subitanea quaedam incuberat, nova quadam seditione exorta, necessitas; et statim synodale a primatibus aecclesiarum cum consilio predict regis servorum Dei factum est concilium': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 13, ll. 23–27.

[183] On the Anglo-Saxon settlement patterns of the area, see S. C. Hawkes and G. Grainger, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Worthy Park, Kingsworthy, near Winchester, Hampshire* (Oxford:

betray a concern for the delineation of agricultural boundaries which could be seen as a symptom of the increasing population density and economic development evident in the archaeological record.[184] The laws were designed to enable some degree of royal mediation within social conflicts of every kind, from murderous feuds to squabbles over pigs and fenceposts.[185] While it can be debated how far these laws were ever put into practice by the King's reeves, the fact that they were written at all implies that Ine and his advisors had sufficient time and interest to concern themselves with regulating the economic basis of the kingdom at the level of the individual household.

A degree of stability would certainly have been necessary for Ine's most ambitious project, the 45-hectare trading settlement of Hamwic on the Hampshire coast, about an hour by foot from Nursling. This project was an unprecedented undertaking for an Anglo-Saxon king during this period, and can be compared only to King Alfred's *burga* of the ninth century.[186] The rapid and strictly controlled expansion of the town (evidenced by numerous short-lived cemeteries across its area), along with the longevity of internal property boundaries, has led Morton to describe Hamwic as 'in many ways an artificial creation. [...] It is manifest that the place was directly ruled by the king or by

Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2003), pp. 1–4; on the buried population of Worthy Park, ibid., pp. 153–71. The large settlement near Chalton, 20 kilometres north-east of Portchester, has been extensively excavated: T. Champion, 'Chalton', *Current Archaeology*, 59 (1977), 364–69; P. V. Addyman and D. Leigh, 'The Anglo-Saxon Village at Chalton, Hampshire: Second Interim Report', *Medieval Archaeology*, 17 (1973), 1–25.

[184] From the sixth century onwards there was an increase in the number of permanent boundaries within settlements across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, which archaeologists tend to interpret as evidence of increasing social stratification and attempts to control space. See A. Reynolds, 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth to Eleventh-Century England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History: Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, 12 (2003), 98–136 (pp. 130–31).

[185] Certain legal rights and responsibilities concerning the use and maintenance of agricultural space were codified in Ine's laws, especially chaps 40, 42, 49–49.3: Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, I, 106–11. See also Faith, *English Peasantry*, p. 120.

[186] Hodges, *Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp. 80–112, offers a useful extended discussion of Hamwic in its wider context, but see the more recent study of V. Birbeck and others, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton: Excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's Stadium, 1998–2000* (Salisbury: Wessex Archaeology, 2005), especially pp. 192–95; also Brisbane, 'Hamwic'; *Excavations at Hamwic*, I: *Excavations, 1946–83*, ed. by D. Morton, CBA Research Report, 84 (York: CBA, 1992); *Excavations at Hamwic*, II: *Excavations at Six Dials*, ed. by P. Andrews, CBA Research Report, 109 (York: CBA, 1997).

his deputy'.[187] The presence of late seventh-century weapon burials similar to those found in the contemporary barrows of Wiltshire points towards a population of high-status royal agents,[188] while the position of the minster of St Mary at the centre of a plot that was integral to the overall street plan further suggests that the West Saxon church also played some role in the establishment of the settlement. The trade route between Hamwic and Rouen also helped bring central Wessex into closer communication with the Frankish realms and was used by Willibald, Boniface's kinsman and later bishop of Eichstätt, when he departed for the Continent with his father in 721.[189]

## The Christian Landscape of Wessex

Indirect evidence for Ine's sponsorship of the West Saxon church can also be seen in the consolidation and expansion of ecclesiastical foundations from the beginning of the eighth century, and their organization into a coherent system that was closely related to a system of royal estates. Both the close relationship between secular and ecclesiastical control and the organization of the West Saxon church itself are important here. In Hessia, as we shall see, Boniface pursued close cooperation with local potentates from the very beginning of his mission, while the arrangement and distribution of his missionary foundations demonstrates his concern with achieving efficient pastoral coverage of the wider population. To this end, he established a network of churches, closely related to pre-existing settlement patterns, that may have been modelled in part on the prevailing system in central Wessex.

The West Saxon system of adminstrative shires, which survives to some extent today, was either established by Ine or was built upon his foundations.[190]

[187] *Excavations at Hamwic*, ed. by Morton, pp. 69–70. Yorke expresses the same view in *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 140.

[188] N. Stoodley, 'Discussion: The Early Cemetery and its Place within Southern England', in V. Birbeck and others, *Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton*, pp. 75–81 (p. 81).

[189] Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *Vita Willibaldi*, chap. 3, p. 91, l. 5. At this time, Anglo-Saxon trade with Frisia appears to have been centred on London. Bede refers to a Frisian slave-trader in London in 679 in *HE*, IV. 22, pp. 404–05. That Boniface himself embarked on a trading vessel for Dorestad from London, not Hamwic, also suggests that London had much better established trading links with Frisia. *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 16, ll. 6–9. For a survey of early medieval Frisian trade, see D. Jellema, 'Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages', *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 15–36.

[190] The earliest reference to Hampshire is in the *Chronicle*'s entry for 755: *ASC*, p. 36. Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 84–87, suggests that the shire system in the west owed a great deal to earlier British

Although information concerning the administration of early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms is very limited, Patrick Hase has outlined a general model for central Wessex whereby the territory was divided into *regiones*, each centred on a *burh* around a royal vill, where the king's reeve lived. From surviving charters, Hase deduces that there was one *villa regalis* every 9 to 12 kilometres.[191] The West Saxon *regiones* were an important stage in this development, with a royal vill and estate acting as administrative centre for the surrounding territory. Each estate was a working farm of slaves and dependents dedicated to maintaining a surplus for the king's use, while the reeve was responsible for representing the king's interests, enforcing dues and duties, keeping the law, and supplying fighting men when necessary.[192]

An important feature of this system was its closeness to ecclesiastical administrative structures. Sam Turner has observed that of the forty-two known pre-Conquest royal vills in western Wessex (Devon, Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire), 70 per cent were within 1km of a likely early minster, and none was more than 9 kilometres removed. While we should be wary of projecting Hase's model too far beyond central Wessex, it does seem that vill and church were often founded side-by-side in the centre of the *regio*'s cultivated landscape, generally on lower valley slopes where the best land was to be found, clearly bounded from surrounding settlements.[193] The seventh- to eighth-century site of Cowage Farm in Wiltshire, 2.5 kilometres south-west of Malmesbury, where a high-status compound was excavated mere metres away from a large separate enclosure containing

administrative units (noting the Brittonic etymology of the shire names Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall), while in the east there was very little continuity from pre-Saxon land arrangements. David Hinton is also strongly sceptical of pre-Saxon influence particularly in Hampshire: 'Hampshire's Anglo-Saxon Origins' in *The Archaeology of Hampshire from the Palaeolithic to the Industrial Revolution*, ed. by S. J. Shennan and R. T. Schadla Hall (Aldershot: Hampshire Field Club, 1981), pp. 56–65 (pp. 57–59).

[191] P. H. Hase, 'The Church in the Wessex Heartlands', in *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex*, ed. by M. Aston and C. Lewis (Oxford: Oxbow, 1995), pp. 47–81 (pp. 52–53). The later medieval administrative division of shires into hundreds appears to have had elements of its origins in the system described by Hase, although the relationship between hundreds and *regiones* is far from clear. For discussion, see Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 299–301; P. H. Sawyer, 'Medieval English Settlements: New Interpretations', in *English Medieval Settlement*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), pp. 1–8 (p. 6); see also Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, pp. 107–09. For a historiographical discussion, see Klingelhöfer, *Manor, Vill and Hundred*, pp. 3–10.

[192] Hase, 'Church', pp. 52–53; Klingelhöfer, *Manor, Vill and Hundred*, pp. 113–15.

[193] Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, pp. 66–67.

a probable church, illustrates how close this relationship could be.[194] Reeve and churchman stood side by side in an enduring and mutually beneficial relationship. As Hase portrays it,

> [A] reeve who had a church would be able to force the free men of that *regio* to come to the gates of his *burh* for their marriages, for the christening of their children and the burying of their dead. In the church the free men would hear the priest preach the importance of obedience and loyalty, under the immediate eye of the reeve. Christianity brought new obligations binding on all men: these new duties would have been enforced by the reeve, thus increasing his public profile and power. The priest would support the reeve at the local court, not least by providing religious awe to the ordeals presided over by the reeve. The reeve alone of the laymen of the *regio* would have had access to written documents if needed. The priest's spiritual powers assisted the reeve, while the reeve's authority supported the priest.[195]

Although there was certainly much local variation, a system such as this formed the backbone of Ine's kingdom. If it was present anywhere, it would have been present in the Wessex heartland of the Solent region, where Hase has identified several early minsters which were associated with ancient royal estates.[196] As both Turner and Hase emphasize, this system was not merely a convenient way of organizing the economic base of Wessex: its impact on concepts of authority and kingship, on the nature of society, and its temporal structure, was just as great. Turner writes of the landscape:

> The changes in the landscape of the conversion period were fundamental. They included the re-focusing of the settled area, the development of new kinds of estates and the drawing of more formal boundaries around territorial units. [...] Churches were at the *ideological* centre of hundreds: they were central to ideas about how the landscape ought to be organized and administered.[197]

---

[194] J. Hinchliffe, 'An Early Medieval Settlement at Cowage Farm, Foxley near Malmesbury', *Archaeological Journal*, 143 (1986), 240–59 (especially fig. 1). Blair proposes that the church at Cowage Farm was dependent on Malmesbury as a 'semi-monastic cell with strongly agrarian functions'. Blair, *Church*, p. 214.

[195] Hase, 'Church', p. 53.

[196] Hase, 'Mother Churches', pp. 46–47. One uncertain case is Romsey, which Hase suspects was an early collegiate minster due to the presence of prebendaries there in 907, apparently independent of the nunnery, who were responsible for local ministry. It is further possible that any minster here had been transferred from Nursling, which had lost its eighth-century status as an important monastic school by the time of Domesday. See Yorke, *Wessex*, pp. 184–85; Blair, *Church*, p. 300.

[197] Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, pp. 181, 113.

Church and vill lay at the heart of the landscape, just as they were at the heart of heavenly and worldly authority. Turner argues here for the power of ideology in determining human interaction with the environment. This phenomenon was not an economically determined accident, for the spatial coincidence observed between sites of secular and religious authority in Wessex did not occur in the Cornish peninsula at this time, where king and church appear to have been less administratively conjoined.[198] Rather, it was the result of a deliberate policy by the secular and religious elites of Wessex.

According to Turner's model, churches were founded in association with royal vills to form the focal points of a 'Christian landscape'. The size and permanence of the buildings contrasted with the shifting, organic transience of contemporary hamlets and enclosed farmsteads, although these too were being increasingly delineated, both physically and legally, into fixed entities. The surrounding territory became orientated towards the church at the centre, a miniature representation of the Holy City of Mediterranean tradition, a 'little Rome in the Mind' as Makye de Jong has called it.[199] Surrounding this core was the populated agricultural landscape, with minor 'outposts' of Christianity such as shrines or chapels scattered throughout. Finally, one came to the marginal land of heath and dense, unused forest: a true wilderness, a place beyond the protection of church and king,[200] where, according to Chapter 20 of Ine's law code, a man could be slain or ransomed for failing to blow a horn: 'If a man from afar or a stranger travels through the wood without following the path or blowing a horn, he can be assumed to be a thief, and can be either slain or held to ransom.'[201] This, then, was the Christian landscape within which Boniface spent the first half of his life. The close cooperation of church and king was expressed symbolically in a jointly

[198] Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, pp. 59–61.

[199] Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, p. 185; M. de Jong, 'Rethinking Early Medieval Christianity: A View from the Netherlands', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 261–76 (p. 270). See also R. Gem, 'Church Buildings: Cultural Location and Meaning', in *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. by J. Blair and C. Pyrah, CBA Research Report, 104 (York: CBA, 1996), pp. 1–6; R. Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 2 (1994), 257–71; Blair, *Church*, pp. 221–28.

[200] Turner, *Making a Christian Landscape*, pp. 186–88.

[201] 'Gif feorcund mon oððe fremde butan wege geond wudu gonge ond ne hrieme ne horn blawe, for ðeof he bið to profianne, oððe to sleanne oððe to áliesanne': Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chap. 20 (I, 98–99).

devised law code, socially in the organization of everyday life according to clearly defined Christian principles and obligations, and physically in the settled landscape itself. Boniface reached maturity during a revolution in the character of West Saxon Christianity, between the political, semi-pagan turbulence of the recent past and the enthusiastically Christian future promised by King Ine.

## Political Conflict and the Missionary Impulse

We cannot know for sure that Boniface and other church members viewed their world in precisely the way envisioned by Turner; but if they did, they must also have recognized the distinction between the ideal envisioned by Ine's laws, where church and king worked in Christian harmony, and the complex reality of Anglo-Saxon politics. Such close connections between the secular and ecclesiastical elite, particularly where kinship was involved, could easily lead political conflict in one sphere to effect the other. Wessex was no exception, especially during the turbulent final years of Ine's reign (*c*. 710 to 726), which coincided with the beginning of Boniface's Continental career as a missionary (from 716 onwards).

As mentioned above, the *Chronicle* has little to say concerning the first half of Ine's reign. It records that in 694 he had received a large compensation from the Cantware, 'the people of Kent', apparently for their burning of Cædwalla's brother Mul following a West Saxon invasion of the province eight years earlier.[202] Since Ine was also devising his law code at this time in close communication with Wihtred, the new king of Kent, this compensation may have formed part of a peace arrangement between the two kingdoms.[203] The *Chronicle* remains silent until 710, when it reports that Ine and his kinsman Nun fought King Geraint of Dumnonia.[204] In 715 it states that Ine fought Ceolred of Mercia at Wodnesbeorg, probably Adam's Grave in Wiltshire.[205] In 722, according to the Welsh Annals, Ine was defeated in a battle on the river Hayle in Cornwall.[206]

---

[202] *ASC*, p. 32.

[203] In Stenton's view, this compensation demonstrates the subjection of Kent to Ine's overlordship, which may also have been the case (*Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 73).

[204] *ASC*, p. 33.

[205] *ASC*, p. 33.

[206] The Welsh Annals are appended to the *Historia Britonnum* of Nennius in a manuscript from the first half of the twelfth century (London, British Library, MS Harley 3895, fols 190ʳ–193ʳ), although the composition of the *Historia Britonnum* can be dated to 828/29. The Annal's

Ine's greatest problems appear to have been caused by internal dissent and dynastic squabbling, the inevitable consequences, perhaps, of having no established system of royal succession.[207] In 721, the year of Boniface's arrival in Hessia, the *Chronicle* remarks without explanation that Ine killed Cynewulf, whom Stenton suggests was a member of the West Saxon royal house;[208] in 722 the otherwise unknown Queen Æthelburg destroyed Ine's stronghold at Taunton in Devon and an exile called Ealdberht fled to Surrey and Sussex.[209] Ine invaded Sussex, apparently without success, and invaded again in 725, this time killing Ealdberht.[210] The following year Ine left for Rome.

I mentioned above Willibald's account of a church council called by Ine 710x16, immediately following or during a rebellion against his rule.[211] One wonders whether Ine's intention in summoning this council was merely to maintain ecclesiastical stability during civil strife, or whether his primary objective was to ensure the loyalty of the most influential West Saxon churchmen. Æthelburg's destruction of Taunton in 722 shows that he later had rivals in the west, where he had founded the bishopric of Sherborne *c.* 705 and where his sister, Cuthburg, had established a double house at Wimbourne in Dorset.[212] Like many Anglo-Saxon royal families, Ine's was tightly woven into the ecclesiastical fabric of its kingdom, and consequently some members of the church were bound to become involved in dynastic disputes.

---

entry for 722 does not mention Ine by name, though he is the most likely enemy: 'Et bellum Hehil apud Cornuenses, Gueith Gartmailauc, Cat Pencon, apud dexterales Brittones, et Brittones uictores fuerunt in istis tribus bellis' (Nennius, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. by J. Morris, Arthurian Period Sources, 8 (London: Phillimore, 1980), p. 87).

[207] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 72–73.

[208] *ASC*, p. 34; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 72. His reason is that the first element of Cynewulf's name alliterates with those of a number of West Saxon kings, including Cynegils, Centwine, and Cenwalh.

[209] *ASC*, p. 34.

[210] *ASC*, p. 34.

[211] '[N]ova quadam seditione exorta': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 13, l. 24. The *terminus ante quem* of the rebellion against Ine is 716, the year of Boniface's first Frisian mission. The council marked the beginning of Boniface's brief career as an ecclesiastical envoy, and it took place after he had established his kingdom-wide reputation as a monastic teacher. Bearing these factors in mind, *c.* 710 appears to be the earliest likely date of the council.

[212] *ASC*, p. 34, under 718.

We find direct evidence for the effect of secular unrest on a monastic community in a letter of Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg to Boniface, written 719x22, during Boniface's second sojourn in Frisia. Eangyth, the abbess of an unidentified nunnery in Wessex or Kent,[213] complained at length of the difficulties caused for her primarily by the King's hatred of her cousin's *gens*.[214] Her community was beset by 'domestic troubles and disputes from many kinds of discord',[215] for the Devil had 'corrupted the rancid hearts of men with malice, most of all monks and fellowships of monks'.[216] She further lamented her poverty, caused in part by the hostility of the King, 'because at his court we are accused by those who envy us'.[217] She went on to inform Boniface that she had lost almost all her relatives, either to death or because they had left as *peregrini* to Rome.[218]

---

[213] Tangl, ep. 14, pp. 21–26. It is not certain that Eangyth's daughter Heaburg, also called *Bugga* in this letter, should be identified with the Bugga of Kent who was one of Boniface's most frequent correspondents in later years (Tangl, ep. 15, pp. 26–28; ep. 27, pp. 47–49; ep. 94, pp. 214–15; for such an identification by Tangl, see ibid., ep. 14, pp. 21–22 n. 2; also B. Yorke, 'The Bonifacian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 154–72 (pp. 145–72); Schipperges, *Bonifatii ac socii eius*, pp. 43-44). The latter Bugga was a close friend and blood relation of King Æthelberht II of Kent, as he stated in a letter of 748x54 to Boniface (Tangl, ep. 105, p. 229, ll. 22–23). If Eangyth and her daughter were in Kent 719x22, the king at the time would have been Æthelberht's father Wihtred; since in her letter Eangyth bemoaned the fact that she had lost every relative ('propinqui et consanguini') apart from a daughter, mother, aunt, and male cousin, against whose *gens* the unnamed king ('rex noster') harboured a great hatred, it seems unlikely that Heaburg is to be identified as a member of the Kentish royal family, let alone that she was later on such friendly terms with a royal dynasty that had all but destroyed her family. Eangyth's letter assumed a familiarity on Boniface's part with the affairs of her family and the current politics of the kingdom in question, which makes an identification with Wessex slightly preferable to Kent; the type of internal political turbulence described by Eangyth also conforms with what we know of the last years of Ine's reign.

[214] '[R]ex noster eius gentem multum exosam habet': Tangl, ep. 14, p. 23, ll. 26–27.

[215] '[D]omesticae rei difficultas et disputatio diversarum discordiarum': Tangl, ep. 14, p. 23, ll. 7–8.

[216] '[Q]ui rancida corda virorum inficit malitia [...] maxime per monasticos et monachorum contubernia': Tangl, ep. 14, p. 23, ll. 9–11.

[217] '[Q]uia accusamur apud eum ab his, nobis qui invident': Tangl, ep. 14, p. 23, ll. 14–15.

[218] Tangl, ep. 14, p. 23, l. 20, to p. 24, l. 8. On *peregrinatio* as permanent exile, see Chapter 6, pp. 242–48, below. Ursula Schaefer has compared Eangyth's complaints with the Old English poem *The Wife's Lament*: U. Schaefer, 'Two Women in Need of a Friend: A Comparison of *The Wife's Lament* and Eangyth's Letter to Boniface', in *Germanic Dialects: Linguistic and Philological Investigations*, ed. by B. Brogyanyi and T. Krömmelbein, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 38 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1986), pp. 491–524.

Eangyth herself desired to join her surviving relatives in Rome with her daughter and appealed to Boniface to support her decision. Although she stated that she had long harboured this desire,[219] it is apparent from the context of her appeal that a journey to Rome and the abandonment of her community at this particular time would have effectively constituted self-imposed political exile. Significantly, she also requested that Boniface receive her persecuted cousin, the monk Denewald, and direct him towards another monk who had been part of the Frisian mission for some time.[220]

Eangyth's letter helps remind us that monks and nuns could choose to join a mission for any number of reasons, among which was the opportunity to escape difficult circumstances at home. Yorke has recently suggested that one of the factors that encouraged Boniface to become a missionary abroad was a desire for advancement to an episcopal office that was denied him in Wessex; if this was one of his motivations it was well-founded, for the two West Saxon bishoprics of Winchester and Sherborne would not become vacant until 744 and 738 respectively, by which time Boniface was already an archbishop.[221] Lul, meanwhile, left his homeland *c*. 738 in the company of two other young men, who he claimed were almost the only friends he had left, in what may have been less than voluntary circumstances.[222] As far as hagiographers such as Willibald were concerned, Anglo-Saxon missionaries joined Boniface in Germania out of love for Christ, not out of fear for man; but these examples demonstrate that placing oneself among friends and relatives in distant Germania may have been desirable or necessary for reasons quite apart from simple piety.

---

[219] She assures Boniface that her former abbess, Wala, had known about it some years previously. Tangl, ep. 14, p. 25, ll. 10–12.

[220] '[D]iu incoluit illam pererinationem': Tangl, ep. 14, p. 26, ll. 11–19.

[221] Yorke, 'The Insular Background', p. 33.

[222] See his letter to Abbess Cuniburg in which he remarks that he, Denehard and Burchard left Wessex on account of the deaths of all their parents and relatives ('genitoris et genetricis et aliorum propinquorum nostrorum ob obitum': Tangl, ep. 49, p. 78, ll. 17–18). Most telling is Lul's fear that his two freedmen, still living in Wessex, will be unlawfully (*sine iustitia*) prevented by unnamed persons from joining him in Germania (ibid., p. 80, ll. 2–4). He also gives a highly poeticized account of his departure from England in a roughly contemporary letter to an unnamed abbess and nun: Tangl, ep. 98, p. 219, ll. 6–18.

*Pastoral Care in the Solent Region*

## Pastoral Care and Episcopal Authority

The process of converting pagans to Christianity was, in Boniface's view, not distinguished in principle from the provision of regular pastoral care.[223] To him, a seriously erring Christian was little better than a pagan; the convert who did not receive guidance in matters of correct belief and behaviour was liable to corruption, and thus it was vital that every baptized individual be thoroughly Christianized under the guidance of canonically ordained bishops. This was Boniface's approach in Hessia and his other territories, and the model for this ideal can be clearly seen in the West Saxon church of the early eighth century. Here we shall first consider the evidence for episcopal influence in the Solent region at this time and then go on to discuss the nature of pastoral care in Wessex, focusing on the provision of preaching, baptism, and post-baptismal confirmation.

There is no direct evidence that Boniface undertook pastoral care in Wessex, although his biographer Willibald stated that he did devote himself to extra-monastic charitable activities when, 'attaining the level of priesthood, enriched by diverse gifts and presents, he devoted himself utterly in deed and desire to almsgiving and works of mercy, in so far as he was able under the constraints of the Rule and the monastic way of life'.[224] Given that Willibald was primarily interested in Boniface's Continental career as reformer and evangelist,[225] his virtual omission of any early pastoral experience Boniface may have had is not surprising. Yet it is hard to imagine that Boniface would have chosen to begin a career as a missionary without having had some experience of preaching to lay audiences and administering to their spiritual needs, and we can assume that, being a rising member of the church who was closely connected to Bishop Daniel of Winchester, he was at least familiar with the methods of organizing and executing pastoral care in Wessex at the time.

The nature of pastoral care in the early Anglo-Saxon period has been much debated. To a certain degree this has been a debate of terminology, with some

---

[223] Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 153.

[224] '[A]d sacerdotalis officii gradum, diuersis donorum ditatus muneribus, accessit, ita ut elemosinis quidem misericordiaeque operibus, quantum sub regulari monasterialique praeualuit districtione, opere penitus ac uoluntate deseruiret': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 3, p. 12, l. 29, to p. 13, l. 1.

[225] Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 61–64.

scholars using the term *minster* to denote those institutions that appear as mother churches in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and others arguing that such a usage on the one hand obscures the wide range of meanings encompassed by the contemporary term *monasterium*, and on the other hand draws a false distinction between those institutions whose primary concern was pastoral care and those which more closely resembled the contemplative, strictly enclosed monastic communities of a later period. Although some points of difference remain, there is general agreement that the term *minster* can be used to describe any form of Anglo-Saxon religious community before the tenth century, regardless of the extent to which it was engaged in pastoral care or maintained a regular monastic life.[226]

I will use the term *minster* in this study to refer not only to Anglo-Saxon religious communities in England, but also to those which Boniface founded in his mission territory. It may feel strange to talk of the famous institutions of Fulda and Fritzlar as minsters, but it will serve to emphasize the point that Boniface regarded such foundations as a natural continuation of the system of ecclesiastical organization he knew from his homeland, a system in which missionary work and pastoral care had from the outset been instigated and developed by monks.[227] It was certainly self-evident to Boniface that his regulated communities at Fritzlar and elsewhere ought to be engaged directly in pastoral ministry, and no less so that all members of the clergy, wherever they were based, live according to monastic discipline; the difference between Fritzlar and a daughter church on the pagan frontier such as Schützeberg was thus one of scale and resources, not fundamental identity.[228]

Another debate has centred on the extent to which seventh- and eighth-century parochial arrangements can be reconstructed from sources dating from the tenth century or later. Some historians and archaeologists, notably Blair, Hase, and Bassett, are optimistic in this regard,[229] while others, including Rollason,

---

[226] See S. Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Review of Terminology', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. by J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 212–25. For two recent discussions of the debate, see Blair, *Church*, pp. 3–5, 153–55, and Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 5–10.

[227] Foot, *Monastic Life*, p. 286.

[228] See Chapter 7, pp. 331–41, below.

[229] J. Blair, 'Introduction: From Minster to Parish Church', in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950–1200*, ed. by J. Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), pp. 1–19; J. Blair, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Topographical Review', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 226–66; J. Blair, 'Ecclesiastical Organisation

Cambridge, Brooks, and Foot, remain sceptical.[230] While my own inclination is to the former position, it is nonetheless crucial that we do not become too enthusiastic in seeking institutional or territorial continuity across such great expanses of time. The same problems that have beset the debate among Anglo-Saxonists also appear in German material; the reconstruction of Boniface's missionary minster network in Hessia, as we shall see, depends in large part upon sources dating from the eleventh century or later.[231]

As Sarah Foot observes, the fundamental distinction for contemporaries such as Bede and Boniface was not between pastorally engaged churches and contemplative monasteries, but between those minsters which fell under episcopal governance, and those which did not.[232] The central question is therefore the degree to which bishops were willing or able to exercise control over the minsters that lay within their dioceses, hence the degree to which pastoral care was undertaken under episcopal direction.[233] Both Bede and Boniface assumed that the

---

and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *Early Medieval England*, 4 (1995), 193–212; Blair, *Church*, pp. 153–60; Hase, 'Mother Churches'; Hase, 'Church in the Wessex Heartlands'; S. Bassett, 'Medieval Lichfield: A Topographical Review', *Transactions of the South Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 22 (1982), 95–98; S. Bassett, 'Church and Diocese in the West Midlands: The Transition from British to Anglo-Saxon Control', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 13–40; S. Bassett, 'Medieval Ecclesiastical Organisation in the Vicinity of Wroxeter and its British Antecedents', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 145 (1992), 1–28.

[230] D. Rollason, 'Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria', in *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by B. Thompson (Stamford: Watkins, 1999), pp. 59–74; E. Cambridge and D. Rollason, 'The Pastoral Organisation of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"', *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995), 87–104; N. Brooks, 'Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance', in *Alfred the Great*, ed. by T. Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 153–74 (pp. 163–73); Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 287–91. For a summary of the debate, see D. Palliser, 'Review Article: The "Minster Hypothesis": A Case Study', *Early Medieval Europe*, 5 (1996), 207–14.

[231] See Chapter 7, pp. 331–43, below.

[232] Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 5, 287–91. Cubitt, 'Pastoral Care', p. 206, has remarked that the canons of the Council of Clofesho were 'concerned not with institutions but with office'; that is, contemporary reformers were worried more about establishing canonical authority and episcopal control over the provision of pastoral care than about defining the character of institutions which undertook it.

[233] Many historians, although they generally agree on the central role of minsters in providing pastoral care, differ on this issue, with Blair more sceptical of the extent to which bishops were able to direct the operations of minsters they claimed within their jurisdiction than Cubitt and Sims-Williams (Blair, *Church*, pp. 112–17; Cubitt, 'Pastoral Care'; Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church*

provision of pastoral care was a basic duty of bishops[234] and urged their fellow ecclesiastics to reform lay religious houses, many of which failed to meet their high standards of regular life and incorporate them into diocesan structures.[235] The influence and prevalence of their views on these matters is evident in the fact that the reforms demanded by the canons of Clofesho, a general church council called by Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury in 747, mirrored many of the reforms that Boniface had advocated in the Frankish councils of the 740s.[236]

Daniel assumed the see of Winchester *c.* 705, around the time Boniface was ordained priest, and was to become one of Boniface's closest friends and advisors. Aldhelm became bishop of Sherborne at about the same time, and, although he died fairly early in Boniface's career as a priest, the overwhelming debt of Boniface's Latin style to Aldhelm reflects the heavy influence of the latter upon the schools of Exeter and Nursling.[237] From the beginning of his active years in the church, then, Boniface moved within a staunchly pro-Roman episcopal *milieu*,[238] and this surely informed his later view that the organization of pastoral care was the proper responsibility of the bishop and the canonically ordained priests and deacons subservient to him.

If we make the assumption that pastoral care in central Wessex was chiefly organized from the early minsters of the area, it then becomes a question of determining the relationship of these minsters to the Bishop of Winchester. How far did Bishop Daniel and his predecessor Haeddi (bishop, 676–705) dominate

*Councils, c. 650–c. 850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 99–113; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, especially pp. 139–40.

[234] See Bede's letter to Archbishop Egbert of York on this matter: Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum episcopum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 405–23, and Boniface's letter to Cuthbert of Canterbury, Tangl, ep. 78, p. 163, l. 19, to p. 164, l. 4.

[235] Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, pp. 405–23; Tangl, ep. 78, p. 169, l. 26, to p. 170, l. 9. In Boniface's view, the only way in which a minster might exist outside diocesan structures was through a papal exemption such as that he obtained for Fulda: see Tangl, ep. 89, pp. 203–05; *UBF*, no. 15, pp. 25–32.

[236] On the dating of the Council of Clofesho and its relationship to the contemporary Frankish councils, see Cubitt, 'Pastoral Care', pp. 102–10. See also A. Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 137–70 (pp. 164–65).

[237] Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, p. 252.

[238] On Aldhelm's loyalty to the Roman Church in matters of orthodoxy, see M. W. Herren, 'Aldhelm the Theologian', in *Latin Learning*, ed. by O'Brien O'Keefe and Orchard, pp. 68–89 (pp. 70–71).

pastoral care in Wessex as a whole, and the Winchester region in particular? Territorial ecclesiastical organization is very difficult to reconstruct at such an early date,[239] and in only a few instances can we surmise a direct relationship between the early minsters of central Wessex and the bishopric of Winchester. The early church and possible minster at Portchester was in the hands of the bishop of Winchester until 904, an arrangement that may date back to the absorption of Wilfrid's missionary areas into the West Saxon bishopric at the time of Cædwalla's conquests.[240] The church at Titchfield, founded by Wilfrid, was probably transferred to the West Saxon bishop at the same time.[241] Given Ine's close support of episcopal authority evident in his laws, the minster church of St Mary's in the royal settlement of Hamwic would almost certainly have been placed under episcopal control.[242] Judging from the close relationship between Boniface and Daniel, the minster at Nursling, later transferred to Romsey, certainly had close links to the Bishop of Winchester. There was a monastery at Bishops Waltham *c.* 705 when Willibald entered it as an oblate; since he was a relative of Boniface,[243] a common social network may also have connected that monastery's abbot, Egwald, to Daniel.[244]

Aside from the mention of the existence of a community at Redbridge/Eling by Bede,[245] nothing more is known of its status as an early minster. The other Anglo-Saxon mother churches of southern Hampshire, which included Christchurch, Fordingbridge, Breamore, Mottisfont, and East Meon, do not appear in

---

[239] Hase, 'Mother Churches', pp. 45–46.

[240] S 372; see S. E. Rigold, 'Litus Romanum: The Saxon Shore Forts as Mission Stations', in *The Saxon Shore*, ed. by D. E. Johnston, CBA Research Report, 18 (York: CBA, 1977), pp. 70–75 (p. 73); Hinton, 'Hampshire's Anglo-Saxon Origins', pp. 61–62.

[241] Rigold, 'Litus Romanum', p. 73. According to Domesday Book, Titchfield was held by King Edward the Confessor prior to the Conquest (*Domesday Book*, IV: *Hampshire*, ed. by J. Munby (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982), 1. 45).

[242] The manor containing St Mary's was held by the Bishop of Winchester at the time of Domesday (*Domesday Book*, ed. by Munby, 3. 16).

[243] For Hygeburg's account of Willibald's entry into the monastery see Hygeburg, *Vita Willibaldi*, chap. 2, p. 89, ll. 1–15; for her statement of his brother Wynnebald's kinship to Boniface, 'qui carnale propinquinatis et sanguini copulatione illo fuerat sociatus', see Hygeburg, *Vita Wynnebaldi*, chap. 4, p. 109, ll. 8–9.

[244] The Bishop of Winchester held Bishops Waltham in 1086 (*Domesday Book*, ed. by Munby, 2. 9).

[245] *HE*, IV. 16, pp. 382–83.

documentary sources until Domesday; hence their relationship to the bishopric of Winchester in the eighth century, assuming they existed at this early date, must remain unclear. In five cases, however, the earliest minsters of the Solent region can be shown to have some connection to the Bishop of Winchester, who had direct control of Portchester, Titchfield, and Hamwic, and some degree of influence over Nursling and perhaps Bishops Waltham. It is worth pointing out that there is no positive evidence to prove that Eling lay outside his control. In other words, pastoral care around the Solent, if not farther afield, was probably arranged under the strong guiding hand of episcopal authority with dedicated royal support. The region may or may not have been peculiar in this respect; but in either case, here we can see the roots of Boniface's later desire to make just such arrangements universal in both the Frankish provinces and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

## What Did Pastoral Care Entail?

If we wish to examine the nature of the pastoral care in Ine's kingdom, we are necessarily reduced to generalities. In this section I will focus on those activities which, from the point of view of Anglo-Saxon churchmen such as Bede and Boniface, comprised the fundamental points of interaction between clerics and the lay population: preaching, baptism, post-baptismal confirmation, and the imposition of penance.

None of the chapters of the Synod of Hertford, held in 673, contains anything explicit about the duties and activities of clerics in administering to the lay population.[246] While one of Ine's laws demands the annual payment of church dues (*ciricsceatte*, or churchscot),[247] there is no provision that commands bishops or abbots to provide regular pastoral care. This was an acute problem in the remoter areas of Northumbria, as Bede complained to Egbert of York:

> For we have heard, and it is well known, that many of the villages and farmsteads of our people are situated in inaccessible mountains and thickly forested valleys, where for years at a time no bishop is seen who provides any ministry or reveals the grace of heaven; and yet not one of these places is immune from paying tithes to that same bishop.[248]

---

[246] *HE*, IV.5, pp. 350–53.

[247] Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chap. 4 (I, 90–91).

[248] 'Audiuimus enim, et fama est, quia multae uillae ac uiculi nostrae gentis in montibus sint inaccessis ac saltibus dumosis positis, ubi nunquam multis transeuntibus annis sit uisus antistes,

Bede was, of course, referring to the remotest of Northumbrian homesteads, those isolated and distant places that St Cuthbert, in his exceptional piety, was prepared to visit, but where other preachers feared to go.[249] The implication is that *ordinary* preachers were in the habit of visiting more accessible locales.[250] Although the remoter parts of Wessex may have similarly lacked good pastoral coverage, itinerant preachers, such as those whom Willibald claimed to have been active in the Exeter region during Boniface's childhood,[251] would have helped cover more central regions. Yet if we were to expect a well-established pastoral system any-where at all in England at the beginning of the eighth century, we should look not to Devon but again to the Solent region, with its dense network of minster churches, its system of Roman roads enabling easy travel and its proximity to the bishop's seat. The Solent region provided a stable base upon which to organize a coherent system of pastoral care.

A fundamental function of the church in caring for the lay population was baptism, and the second law of Ine was intended to enforce this.[252] Interestingly, the law places the responsibility for prompt baptism on the child's guardians, giving them thirty days to accomplish it on pain of a thirty shilling fine; if the child should die unbaptized after this time, all the possessions of the guardians were forfeit.[253] The timescale is significant here, for the law appears to assume that the ecclesiastical framework for universal baptism is in place, but that it may take up to thirty days for a guardian to make use of it. Since it would not always have been practical for parents and godparents to carry every newborn infant to the nearest minster for baptism, this further suggests that itinerant priests such as those evoked by Willibald were responsible for administering the rite within their

qui ibidem aliquid ministerii aut gratiae caelestis exhibuerunt; quorum tamen ne unus quidem a tributis antisti reddendis esse possit immunis': Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, p. 410.

[249] *HE*, IV.27, pp. 432–35; Bede, *Vita sancti Cuthberti*, in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 141–307 (chap. 9, pp. 184–87).

[250] Blair, *Church*, p. 161.

[251] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 2, p. 5, ll. 4–7.

[252] Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chap. 2–2.1 (I, 90–91).

[253] The Penitentials of Theodore, on the other hand, hold the priest directly accountable if he is notified of an infant and fails to baptize it before it dies. Theodore, *Poenitentiali Theodori*, in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878), III, 173–203 (I. 14. 28, p. 189).

territories. These priests, based at minsters or dependent chapels, would have been responsible for visiting every settlement at least once a month in order to preach and administer the necessary sacraments using chrism obtained directly from the Bishop.[254]

We have no way of telling how successfully this scheme was implemented. The anonymous eighth-century monk whose account of his vision of hell, preserved among the letters of Lul, included crowds of children 'for the most part dying under Bishop Daniel without baptism',[255] appears to have been condemning a failure on Daniel's part to establish baptism on a sufficient scale in Wessex. Again, however, this criticism may relate to the more remote areas of the kingdom, and we must also take into account the fact that the extremely high infant mortality rates of the period would make timely, universal baptism extremely difficult to attain.[256] Note that it is only infants, not adults, who were dying unbaptized in the monk's vision, and this itself implies that most of the adult population were baptized Christians by the end of Daniel's episcopate in 744.

Bede, in his letter to Egbert, implies that itinerant post-baptismal confirmation by the laying-on of hands was one of the fundamental duties of Northumbrian bishops by the 730s.[257] Although the sacrament of confirmation is not referred to in the decrees of the Synod of Hertford (673) or the Council of Clofesho (747), an incidental reference to the *biscopsunu*, 'spiritual son at confirmation',[258] in the law codes of Ine indicates that the rite of episcopal confirmation was known and incorporated into the social fabric of Ine's Wessex by the end of

---

[254] S. Foot, '"By Water in the Spirit:" The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 171–92 (pp. 181–82); Foot, *Monastic Life*, pp. 299–302; Blair, 'Minster Churches', pp. 50–52; Blair, *Church*, pp. 161–62.

[255] '[I]nfantium numerosam multitudinem sub Danielo episcopo maxime sine baptismo morientium': Tangl, ep. 115, p. 249, ll. 7–8.

[256] Fleming estimates a child mortality rate during the early medieval period of just under 50 per cent, and an infant mortality rate of about 25 per cent (R. Fleming, 'Bones for Historians: Putting the Body Back in Biography', in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. by D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 29–48 (p. 37)).

[257] See his comments regarding the failure of bishops to administer the rite in remote settlements: 'nec solum talibus locis desit antistes, qui manus impositione baptizatos confirmet' (Bede, *Epistola ad Egbertum*, p. 410).

[258] T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Supplement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 93.

the seventh century.[259] The episcopal duty of confirming the baptized with chrism is also mentioned in Theodore's late seventh-century *Penitentials*.[260] The sacrament of post-baptismal confirmation would therefore have been very familiar to Boniface by the time he attained the rank of priest *c.* 705.

According to his biographer Willibald, Boniface performed confirmations by the laying-on of hands in Hessia immediately after he was ordained bishop in 723,[261] and in the years to come he helped introduce the originally Roman rite of confirmation to the continent north of the Alps, where it had previously been largely unknown.[262] The decrees of the Concilium Germanicum of 742, behind which Boniface was a prime mover, stated that bishops were to be responsible for performing rounds of post-baptismal confirmation in settlements throughout their dioceses.[263] This method of administering the rite is strikingly similar to that alluded to by Bede and suggests an attempt by Boniface to spread throughout Frankish territory a custom prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Boniface's establishment of bishoprics in his mission field and his promotion of Lul to the rank of assistant bishop (*chorepiscopus*) must therefore be understood in relation to the importance he placed upon the rite of post-baptismal confirmation.[264]

[259] Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chap. 76. 3 (I, 122–23). The law states that the compensation due to the person who had sponsored the murdered individual at his confirmation is half that due to the godfather.

[260] Theodore, *Poenitentiae*, I. 4. 5–9, p. 193.

[261] 'Hessorum iam multi, catholica fide subditi ac septiformis spiritus gratia confirmati, manus inpositionem acciperunt': *Vita Bonifatii*, p. 30, l. 19, to p. 31, l. 1.

[262] A. Angenendt, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), pp. 471–73; M. Garrison, 'The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 114–61 (p. 138). The Frankish rite of anointing the hands of priests and bishops at their consecration, the earliest liturgical sources for which are early eighth-century in date, also appears to be insular in origin. See B. Kleinheyer, *Die Priesterweihe im römischen Ritus: Eine liturgiehistorische Studie*, Trierer theologische Studien, 12 (Trier: Paulinus, 1962), pp. 86–87. On the possible influence of post-baptismal anointing on Carolingian royal anointing rituals, see J. Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice', in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. by D. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 137–80 (pp. 149–53).

[263] Tangl, ep. 56, p. 100, ll. 10–13.

[264] For a discussion of the Hessian context, see Chapter 7, pp. 380–87, below.

Finally there is the matter of the imposition of penance upon the lay population by the Anglo-Saxon church. The purpose of penance was to allow sinners to atone for their wrongdoings and to encourage 'correct' Christian behaviour among the ordinary people.[265] Itinerant preaching and the ministration of the sacraments required only the occasional compliance of the common people, but to encourage them to behave from one day to the next in a truly 'Christian' fashion required a degree of influence and control that the church did not always have. Adultery, sodomy, theft, and murder (the latter two of which also earned secular punishment under Ine's laws)[266] were serious sins, requiring lengthy periods of such penance as fasting, excommunication, and almsgiving.[267] Archbishop Theodore also imposed penance upon practioners of pagan sacrifice, auguries, incantation and divination, measures that were condemned on numerous occasions by Boniface.[268]

We must allow for a certain amount of variation in the success of enforcing such measures, depending on the frequency with which preachers visited a given community, the degree of support of the local reeve, and so on. Many offences that monks such as Boniface and Bede found repugnant formed an integral part of social life beyond the cloisters, and the rural population may not have much appreciated a band of visiting monks condemning their folk traditions and celebrations by invoking the theological doctrine of Augustine and St Paul.[269] A discerning preacher, unable to impose penance on entire communities, would either have to turn a blind eye or persuade the populace to reinterpret their customs in a Christian framework.

[265] A. J. Frantzen, 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 23–56; Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care', pp. 161–62.

[266] Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, chap. 7–7.1 (I, 92–93).

[267] Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care', pp. 159–60.

[268] Theodore, *Poenitentiali*, I. 15. 1, 4–5, pp. 189–90; for the Council of Clofesho, see *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, ed. by Haddan and Stubbs, chap. 3, p. 360. See also T. Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*', in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. by M. Lapidge, CSASE, 11 (1995), pp. 141–74. See Chapter 7, pp. 380–87, below.

[269] Boniface quoted both Augustine and St Paul to Pope Zacharias on the matter of secular celebrations in Rome in 742: Tangl, ep. 50, p. 85, ll. 5–13. See also R. Meens, 'The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance', in *Handling Sin*: *Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. Biller and A. J. Minnis, York Studies in Medieval Theology, 2 (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), pp. 35–61 (pp. 50–51).

## Conclusion

Boniface was born and spent his youth during the dramatic formative period of Wessex. Saxon rule had only recently swept westwards from the barrows of the Wiltshire downs, imposed upon the Britons by a sword-wielding warrior elite who claimed to be descended from Germanic pirates and adventurers. This triumph coincided with their conversion to Christianity, and they soon realized the benefits of the new religion. Boniface's parents were among those Saxons who carved out new estates for themselves on the western frontier in the 660s, establishing their economic, social, and political superiority over their British neighbours and eagerly supporting the Saxon church with the donation of their young son to the minster at Exeter. He reached maturity in a frantic atmosphere of conflict and reform, in which loyalty to Rome and to orthodox episcopal government was the common root of both worldly and heavenly order.

When in Chapter 7 we come to consider in detail the evidence for pastoral care and ecclesiastical arrangements in Hessia, we shall see that the system established by Boniface was deeply informed by his experiences in the West Saxon church. The coherent network of mother parishes that he established in Hessia bears comparison with the minster arrangements of the Winchester region, both in terms of a spatial arrangement that implies the regularized provision of pastoral care, and the organization of parishes under close episcopal supervision. Similarly, Boniface's later recognition of the importance of close cooperation between ecclesiastical and secular authority and his enduring loyalty to Rome had their roots in the history and organization of the church in the West Saxon heartlands. His experience of pastoral care in the Solent region clearly informed his later attempts to impose universal baptism and confirmation under close episcopal supervision on the Continent. Hessia, where the Frankish church had made very little impact by the time of Boniface's arrival, offered him a virtually blank slate upon which to found his ideal church; yet it also brought specific challenges and contexts that demanded a degree of adaptability, innovation, and compromise. In the next chapter we shall examine closely the context of Hessia in the years leading up to Boniface's arrival.

# HESSIA ON THE EVE OF
# THE BONIFATIAN MISSION

J ust as important as a clear understanding of the context of Boniface's for-
mative years in Wessex is an understanding of Hessia at the time of his arrival.
Wessex, in particular the Solent region, had given Boniface experience of
a church founded on strong episcopal control with the support of a king who
was prepared to work closely with his bishops to ensure the stability of a truly
Christian kingdom. The Frankish elite had a long and complex history of inter-
action with the church that differed in many ways from the relationship between
Ine, a petty king in Frankish terms, and his two recently founded West Saxon
bishoprics.[1] At the time of Boniface's arrival, Hessia was a border region on the
very edge of Frankish-controlled territory, caught between the expansionist
ambitions of Franks and Saxons, yet with a history and character of its own. Local
and supra-regional politics entwined in Hessia, creating a context that threw as
many challenges as opportunities in the path of the mission.

We shall begin this chapter with an examination of the topography, climate,
resources, and communications of Hessia. There will follow a brief discussion of
the Roman-period inhabitants of Hessia (the Chatti of Tactitus's *Germania*) and
a consideration of the degree of cultural continuity into the early medieval period.
Next, we shall examine the gradual development of Frankish influence in Hessia
in the century preceding Boniface's mission. I have divided this development into
three approximate phases according to the archaeological evidence: phase 1, up to
about 650, during which the Franks consolidated their control of the Rhine-Main

---

[1] For Boniface's relationship with the Frankish secular elites, see Chapter 7, below, pp.
349–70.

region but had little apparent impact on Hessia; phase 2, between the middle and end of the seventh century, a period of overlordship which saw the appearance of small numbers of high-status Franks in central Hessia; and phase 3, from the 790s onwards, when Hessia became a highly militarized, fiercely disputed border region during the early Frankish-Saxon wars. The chapter will conclude with some observations on the social, political, and religious context of Hessia when Boniface arrived in 721.

## The Physical Landscape of Hessia

### Topography

As stated in Chapter 2, the region I refer to as Hessia is within the northernmost part of the present-day German state of Hesse, which in its modern form extends south of the Rhine and Main. The borders of Hessia were never clearly delineated in the early medieval period; my definition is based on eighth- and ninth-century charter clauses which state that particular settlements lay within the *pagus Hessorum* (see Map 4).[2] The question of ethnic identity in eighth-century Hessia, which is by no means clear-cut, will be dealt with in a later chapter.[3]

Hessia measures approximately 90 kilometres north-south by 80 kilometres east-west, equivalent to roughly one-third of the area of early eighth-century Wessex. It is contained within the Central German Uplands, a region of high ground which forms part of the Central European Uplands, stretching from the Massif Central in France to the Czech Republic and Poland. Its western and eastern boundaries are formed by sparsely inhabited, forested hill country that separate it from the middle Rhine valley and the Thuringian plain respectively. The northern limit of Hessia is the river Diemel, and the southern lies approxiately on the Weser/Rhine watershed. The major Hessian peaks are the Vogelsberg (774 m above sea level), the Knüll-Gebirge (636 m), and the Kellerwald (675 m). The various river valleys of Hessia rarely rise above an elevation of 350 metres. Due to a period of volcanic activity some five to seven million years ago, one peculiarity of the Habichtswald district north of Fritzlar is an abundance of basalt extrusions across the landscape. These extrusions were formed by fast-cooling lava flows that solidified into basalt and were exposed by later erosion,

---

[2] For a distribution map of charter donations within the *pagus Hessorum* prior to 900, see F. Backhaus, 'Die Gaue vor und nach 900'.

[3] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 197–200.
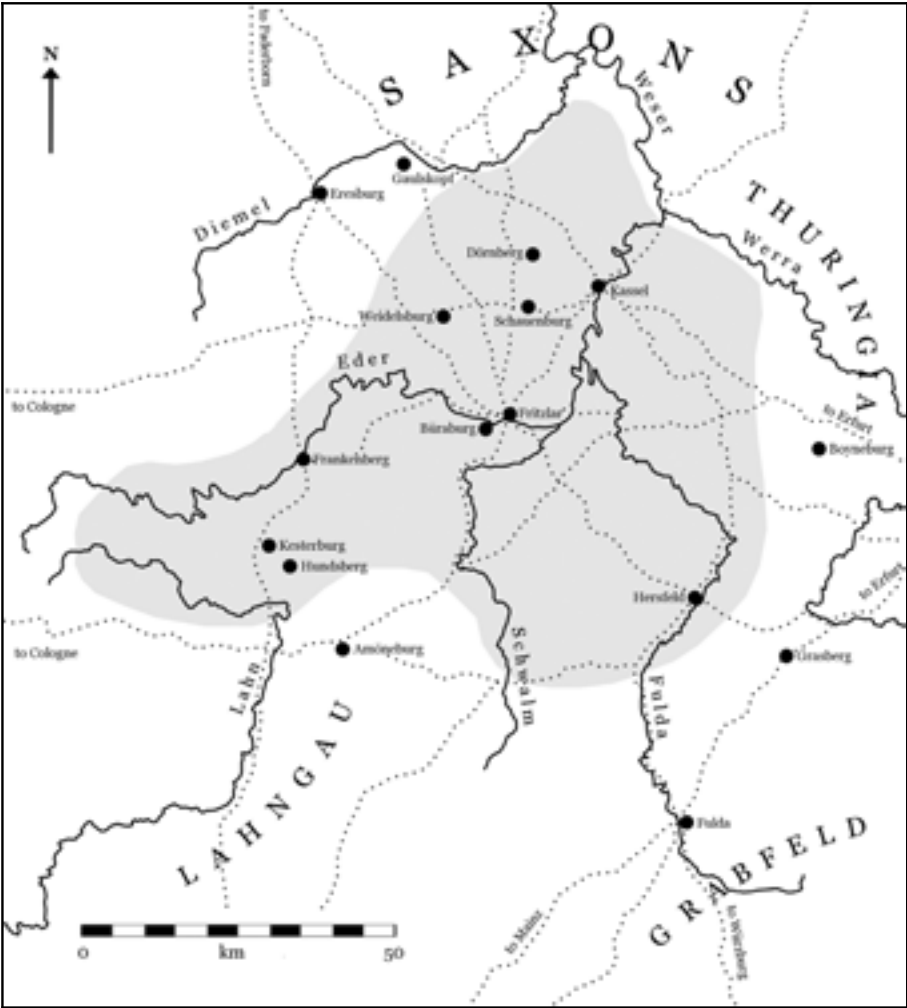
Map 4. Hessia *c*. 721 (shaded region), showing known
or possible fortifications and communication routes.

leaving the region dotted with chains of high peaks and striking rock formations that often resemble artificial columns and platforms.[4]

The river system to the north-east of the watershed noted on Map 5 drains into the Weser and thence to the low-lying land of Saxony. The three main navigable waterways of this river system are the Fulda, which flows north from the Rhön, the Eder, which flows east from the Rothaargebirge before joining the lower Fulda, and the Werra, which combines with the Fulda to form the Weser. The Edersee, midway along the Eder, is an artificial reservoir created in the early twentieth century. South-west of the watershed, the river systems are dominated by the Rhine and Main valleys. Immediately north of the Main is the Wetterau basin, a fertile, low-lying area between the Taunus ridge and the Vogelsberg. On the opposite side of the Taunus is the Lahn valley, which flows from central Hessia south-west towards the Rhine. The Kinzig and the Saale form important communication corridors from the Middle Rhine towards Thuringia.

## Climate and Resources

There are very few climatological data surviving from the early medieval period, and so the following discussion of the Hessian climate is based on measurements from the last century. It must be borne in mind throughout that conditions in eighth-century Hessia may have been different; there is some evidence in particular that winters were significantly harsher in Western Europe during the early medieval period than they are today.[5] The climate of the modern region is temperate, with few extremes of temperature throughout the year.[6] The average daily temperatures are 0–1 degrees Celsius in January, 16.5–17.5 degrees Celsius in July.

---

[4] F. Rösing, 'Morphologie und Geologie', in *Landschaftsrahmenplan Naturpark Habichtswald*, ed. by H. Heintze (Darmstadt: Institut für Naturschutz, 1971), pp. 9–13 (p. 13).

[5] On the difficulties of determining climatic change in the medieval period, see R. S. Bradley, M. K. Hughes, and H. F. Diaz, 'Climate in Medieval Time', *Science*, 302 (2003), 404–05. On the early medieval documentary evidence for notoriously harsh winters, see H. H. Lamb, *Climate History and the Modern World* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 157. A letter of Abbot Cuthbert of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow to Lul alludes to the devastating winter of 763/64 that affected both Anglo-Saxon and Frankish regions: Tangl, ep. 116, p. 251, ll. 8–11.

[6] For most of the information in this and the following paragraph, see A. Rühl, *Das hessische Bergland: Eine forstlich-vegetationsgeographische Übersicht* (Bad Godesberg: Bundesanstalt für Landeskunde und Raumforschung, 1967), pp. 8–13; also the various maps of *Geschichtliche Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel.
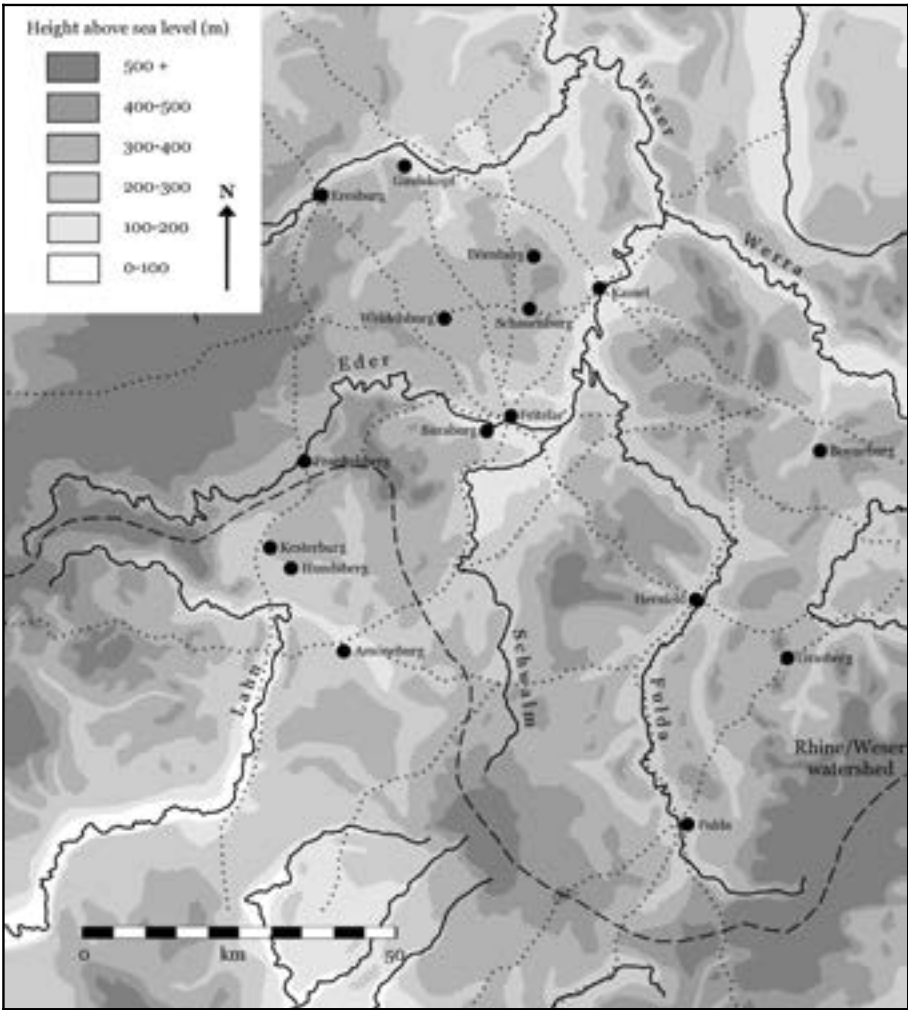
Map 5. The landscape of Hessia. The densely settled core
of Hessia was along the lower Eder, Schwalm, and Fulda.

Generally speaking, the highest points in the region will have temperatures 3 to 4 degrees cooler than in the river valleys. Fritzlar, in the centre of Hessia, presently receives an average annual rainfall of 550–600 millimetres, slightly less than the south of England.

Modern Hesse north of the Main is still a heavily forested region, in particular the north and the east. The natural woodland, overwhelmingly beech (OHG *buohha*, whence the ancient name *Buc(h)onia* for the Fulda region), dominates the higher ground. Beech wood is not especially durable, but it has manifold other uses in tanning, boat-building, and fence, roof, and tool construction. Its sap can also be fermented into a beer or wine, other parts of the tree can serve various medicinal functions, and its leaves are edible. On the lower slopes, beech mixes with oak and other less common species such as alder, birch, ash, sycamore, elm, and lime tree. The larch, pine, and fir trees found in parts of Hesse today are more recent introductions. Although cattle are raised in places, most especially in the north, the modern countryside is chiefly arable. Grain, fruit, and potatoes are today extensively cultivated in the fertile valley regions, while the Rhine valley in the south of the province, particularly the southern slopes of the Taunus ridge, can produce excellent wine. The eighth-century agricultural landscape would have involved a much greater degree of animal husbandry, not only for food, but because animals were the principal source of clothing material and non-human locomotion, and also an important basis of a largely coinless economy.

While the modern hiker is unlikely to meet anything in the Hessian woods larger than a deer or more aggressive than a wildcat, until early modern times Hessia's large tracts of undisturbed woodland provided ideal habitats for large herbivores and predators. The existence of wild horses can be inferred from Boniface's letters,[7] and it is also likely that herds of European bison still survived in some areas. Brown bears were not hunted to extinction until the end of the fifteenth century, and may be recalled in the place-name *Bärenberg*, a large hill overlooking the Warme valley.[8] Wild boar are still widespread, wolves survived

---

[7] The reference is in a letter of *c.* 732 in which Pope Gregory III instructs Boniface to forbid the native custom of eating the flesh of wild and tame horses. Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 24–25.

[8] C. Hartmann, 'Die Tierwelt', in *Landschaftsrahmenplan Naturpark Habichtswald*, ed. by Heintze, pp. 27–34 (p. 27). The name of Bärenberg comes from OHG *bären-berg*, 'bear's hill', although the antiquity of the place-name is unknown; it should also be noted that OHG *bäro*, 'bear', was used as a personal name, and that Bärenberg is flanked by two other hills bearing personal names (*Gudenberg*, meaning 'Gudo's hill', and *Bosenberg*, 'Boso's hill').

in remoter parts of Hessia until the eighteenth century, while the place-name *Ehlen*, at the foot of Bärenberg, may be a reference to the elk which still survive in the Kellerwald-Edersee National Park.[9] All of these animals, with the exception of the relatively recently introduced raccoon, would have existed in eighth-century Hessia in far greater numbers than today. Bears in particular would have made solitary travel deep in the woods hazardous, while wolves, 'the animal par excellence of the forest wilderness',[10] must have posed a constant threat to livestock, not least during the lean winter months.

## Settlement and Communications

Hessia in the eighth century was a region of gentle, winding valleys, rolling hills, and large tracts of forest, punctuated by occasional volcanic outcrops of black basalt. In the Roman and early medieval periods there were two main districts of relatively dense settlement and cultivation in Hessia: the first was the lower Eder around Fritzlar (modern population 15,000); the second was along the lower Fulda to the north-east of Fritzlar, an area now dominated by the city of Kassel (population 200,000).[11] The predominant modern settlement pattern is of small,

---

[9] K. Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen in Hessen: Verbreitung und Entfaltung bis 1200* (Marburg: Elwert, 1990), p. 239, does not attempt a derivation of Ehlen, attested *c.* 1015 as *Elheno*, in 1074 as *Aeleheine* and *Eleheine* (H. Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon für Kurhessen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1926), p. 104). The first element may be OHG *el(a)ho*, 'elk', followed by the suffix *-ine*. See A. Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, 3 vols (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1952–56), II, pt I, 208: 'Die Bildungen sind verwandt mit den stoffanzeigenden Adjektiven auf germ. *-ina*, [...] das hier die Eigenart der Umgebung bennent.' *Ehlen* would thus mean 'the place of the elk'. An alternative (though less likely) origin for *Aeleh-/Eleh-* could be OHG *alah*, 'temple'; see Chapter 7, below, pp. 292–95.

[10] J. Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. by A. Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 247 n. 15.

[11] Kassel is first attested in 913 as *Chassella/Chassalla* (*Die Urkunden Konrad I., Heinrich I. und Otto I.*, ed. by Theodor Sickel, MGH, Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae, 1 (1879), nos 15–16, pp. 15–16). The widely accepted derivation of *Chassella/Chassalla* from OHG *kastel*, 'city, fortification', ultimately from Latin *castellum* (for example, Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 231), would suggest that Kassel originated as a Carolingian royal estate and fortification at a strategic crossing point of the river Fulda, probably not before the late eighth century. Karl Heinemeyer, however, suggests that it is derived from a lost river name ('Die Anfänge der Stadt Kassel', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by F.-R. Herrmann, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 7 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1986), pp. 13–30 (p. 15). In either case, the

nucleated villages and hamlets. There is some archaeological evidence for nucleated settlement in the prehistoric and early medieval periods, notably at the extensively excavated sites of Geismar and Holzheim,[12] but these two settlements, being closely connected to the Frankish centres of Fritzlar and Büraburg, were most likely atypical in their size. Most of the population would have lived in dispersed farmsteads or small villages scattered along the main valleys, each surrounded by its own patches of cultivated land, open pasture, and rough woodland grazing, separated from more distant neighbours by stretches of dense forest.[13] As we shall see later in this chapter, the period from 700 did see some clearing of fresh lands, but charter and place-name evidence demonstrates that the forests of eastern and southern Hessia in particular were not extensively colonized before the eleventh century.[14]

A major characteristic of Hessia throughout its history has been its function as a north-south communications corridor through the Central German Uplands, 'a real transit land and a turntable for trade and traffic', as Hecktor Amman described it.[15] Since archaeologists and historians have long recognized this characteristic of early medieval Hessia, some effort has been put into identifying the main communication routes through the use of archaeology, historical references and the cautious assumption that the major routeways altered little between the early and late medieval periods.[16] Numerous long-distance trading routes

---

topographical situation and the early importance of Kirchditmold, 4 km west of central Kassel, suggests that the district was already a focus of settlement well before the Carolingian period. See Chapter 7, below, pp. 331–41.

[12] See below, pp. 168–76.

[13] W. Rösener, *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans. by A. Stützer (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 49–50.

[14] These regions are dominated by place-names including the element *-rode* (OHG *rod*, 'clearing'), which indicates the virgin clearance of woodland. Although this place-name form was in use from the eighth century, Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, pp. 133–34, shows that 89 per cent of the recorded examples before 1200 first appear in eleventh- or twelfth-century sources. See also M. Gockel, 'Siedlungsnamen-Typen I und II', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 185–89, Karte 28b (p. 188).

[15] '[E]in richtiges Durchgangsland und ein Drehscheibe für Handel und Verkehr': H. Amman, 'Der hessische Raum in der mittelalterlichen Wirtschaft', *HJL*, 8 (1958), 37–70 (pp. 42–43).

[16] See Wand, *Die Büraburg*, pp. 15–16, and Beilage 8; G. Landau, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der alten Heer- und Handelstraßen in Deutschland*, Hessische Forschungen zur geschichtlichen

traversed Hessia during the medieval period, and are illustrated on Map 4. The Strata Regia (first recorded in 1224) led from Cologne across the Siegerland towards Amöneburg and central Hessia,[17] while a second road from Cologne swung to the north, crossing the Sauerland and northern Hessia en route to Kassel. The main route between Frankfurt and Saxony was the Weinstraβe, which led north via Hessia to Paderborn. This was the major Frankish military route north during their eighth-century campaigns against the Saxons, and has been securely identified thanks to a series of fortified sites along its length;[18] its importance as a former trading route is signified by its name, a dialect word for *Wagenstraβe*, 'wagon road'.[19] Other roads led from Frankfurt and the Lahn towards Thuringia, skirting Hessia on the way.

The importance of the lower Eder and Fulda basin as a natural hub of regional communications is also clear from Map 4, which shows the web of long-distance and local routes that converged on the crossing points at Fritzlar and Kassel. The fact that the lower Eder was a centre of communications will have profound implications when we come to consider the earliest phases of Boniface's Hessian mission in Chapter 6, particularly his choice of Fritzlar as the site of his first monastic foundation. From Fritzlar there were four local routes into Saxony. The first went north-west along the forested backbone of the Langerwald towards the upper Diemel at Eresburg, the second and third north towards a pair of crossing points on the middle Diemel, and the fourth north-east towards Kassel on the Fulda.

Landes- und Volkskunde, 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958); H. Krüger, *Hessische Altstraßen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Hessische Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landes- und Volkskunde, 5 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963); W. Görich, 'Rast-Orte an alter Straβe? Ein Beitrag zur hessischen Straβen- und Siedlungsgeschichte', in *Festschrift Edmund E. Stengel zum 70. Geburtstag am 24. Dezember 1949* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1952), pp. 473–94.

[17] The second reference to the route is from 1356, where it is named the *Rychis straze*, 'King's Way'. Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 16 n. 5; H.-P. Lachmann, *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte des Burgwaldes im Mittelalter*, Schriften des hessischen Landesamtes für geschichtliche Landeskunde, 31 (Marburg: Elwert, 1969), p. 15.

[18] Görich, 'Rast-Orte an alter Straβe?', pp. 490–91, Abb. 1; F. Schwind, 'Zur Geschichte des heute hessischen Raumes im Frühmittelalter', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 34–46 (p. 39).

[19] Schlesinger, 'Early Medieval Fortifications', pp. 252–53.

*Roman and Post-Roman Background*

**The Chatti**

Hessia was never part of the Roman Empire, but was immediately adjacent to the *limes*. The group-name *Hessi*, although it appears in documentary sources only from the eighth century,[20] is generally accepted by philologists to be derived from *Chatti*, the name given by Roman writers to the tribe living immediately north of the Wetterau.[21] The earliest attestation of the Chatti is in Tacitus's late first-century survey of the tribes who dwelled along the middle Rhine. He wrote that the Chatti lived in the forest of Hercynium,[22] a range of wooded hills which ran from the Rhine across much of central Europe and whose name survived into the early medieval period as Buchonia. The area described by Tacitus cannot be precisely demarcated, although H. von Petrikovits considers the hills in question to be the Vogelsberg and Rhön regions north of the Main.[23] The territory of the Chatti would thus stretch northwards, encompassing Hessia at least as far as the Weser, where the hills of the Central German Uplands begin to merge with the low-lying country beyond. Roman dealings with the Chatti were predominantly military; Tacitus in fact noted that the Chatti, unlike other tribes of Germania, had developed a sophisticated and highly organized approach to warfare apparently based on the Roman model. Cassius Dio, writing over a century after Tacitus, describes turbulent political and military events among the Germanic

---

[20] The earliest appearance of the name *Hessi* is in a letter of Gregory III dating to *c.* 738. Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, l. 11.

[21] Although the derivation is undisputed, there is no consensus on the original meaning of the name *Chatti*. See E. Wamers, 'Zu den Anfängen der Altertumsforschung in Hessen', *Hessen im Frühmittelalter*, ed. Roth and Wamers, pp. 13–17 (p. 13); D. Baatz, 'Römische Eroberungen unter den flavischen Kaisern, Bau des Limes', in *Die Römer in Hessen*, ed. by D. Baatz and F.-R. Herrmann (Hamburg: Nikol, 2002), pp. 66–83 (p. 72); G. Neumann, philological contribution to 'Chatti', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by H. Beck and others, 2nd edn, 35 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973– ) (henceforth *RGA*), IV (1981), 377–78; Schwind, 'Zur Geschichte des heute hessischen Raumes', p. 37; A. Bach, 'Chatti-Hassi: Zur Deutung des Namens der Hessen', *HJL*, 4 (1954), 1–20.

[22] Tacitus, *Germania*, in *Cornelii Taciti opera minora*, ed. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Ogilvie, Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 37–62 (chap. 30, p. 52, ll. 20–24).

[23] H. von Petrikovits, historical contribution to 'Chatten', in *RGA*, IV, 379–85 (p. 380).

tribes around 10 BC in which the Chatti figure several times.[24] According to Tacitus, the major settlement of the Chatti, Mattium, which lay immediately north of the Eder (*Adrana*), was laid waste in a Roman campaign of AD 15.[25]

In contrast to the Wetterau, Roman-period Hessia as a whole appears extremely sparsely populated in Map 6, which is in part due to the nature of the archaeological evidence. In the south, both the widespread use of stone building material in the Roman period and the higher level of modern development activity has enabled a far greater proportion of occupation sites to be archaeologically identified. Considering the generally low quantity of Roman-period archaeological evidence across the whole of Hessia, however, it does seem apparent that the main focus of Roman-era settlement in the region was the crook of the lower Eder. This area, a natural communications hub within the Hessian corridor as observed above, has demonstrated by far the greatest density of first-century AD to fifth-century archaeological material outside the Wetterau, particularly settlements (identified primarily through the presence of imported Roman terra nigra ceramics) and urn cremation burials.[26]

## Post-Roman Population Shift

The Chatti are not to be found listed among the tribes supposed by the historical sources to have moved by migration or invasion in the late and post-Roman period. Even so, it was for a long time received wisdom amongst archaeologists that the Chatti took their part in the great *Völkerwanderungen*, and had left their homeland of northern Hessia all but deserted.[27] The work of Gerhard Mildenberger

---

[24] Cassius Dio, *Dio's Roman History*, ed. and trans. by E. Cary, 9 vols (London: Heinemann, 1914–27), LIV. 33. 2 (VI, 366–67); LIV. 36. 3 (VI, 374–75); LIV. 33. 4 (VI, 368–69); LV. 1. 2 (VI, 380–81).

[25] Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ed. by F. R. D. Goodyear, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), I. 56 (I, 4, ll. 1–8). See Petrikovits, 'Chatten', p. 379; Neumann, 'Chatten', p. 378; A. Becker, 'Mattium', *RGA*, XIX (2000), 443–44.

[26] M. Seidel, 'Großromstedt- und älterkaiserzeitliche Siedlungskeramik aus Netze, Stadt Waldeck, Kreis Waldeck-Frankenberg', *FH*, 32/33 (1992/93), 111–27 (pp. 116–27); G. Mildenberger, *Römerzeitliche Siedlungen in Nordhessen*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 3 (Marburg: Elwert, 1972), especially pp. 102–10 and Karten 6 and 7.

[27] See for example R. von Uslar, *Westgermanische Bodenfunde des 1. bis 3. Jahrhunderts n. Christ aus Mittel- und Westdeutschland*, Germanische Denkmäler der Frühzeit, 3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938), p. 148; K. E. Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, 2nd edn (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978), p. 81.
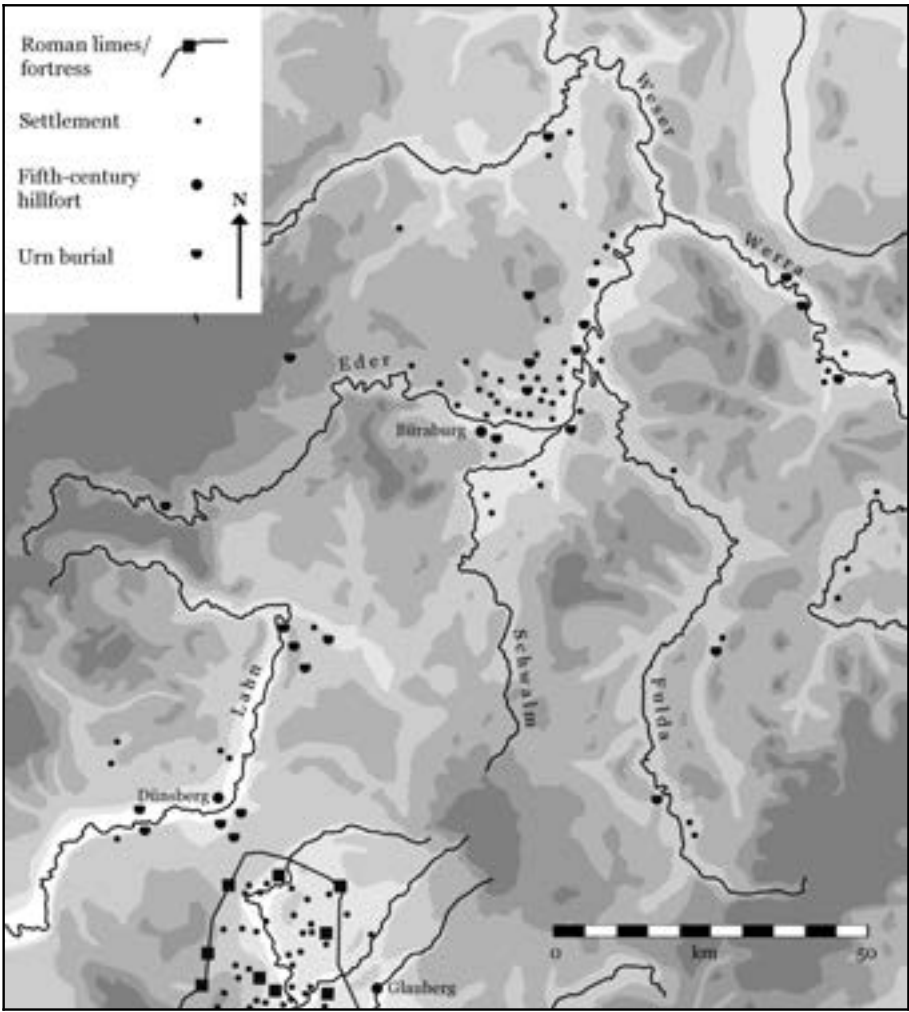
Map 6. Roman-period Hessia, showing the relatively
dense occupation at the Eder-Schwalm-Fulda confluence.

in the 1970s helped challenge this theory, particularly through his detailed study of terra nigra pottery finds.[28] This form of wheel-turned pottery, Roman-produced or produced after Roman models, contrasts strongly with the far more numerous local hand-produced wares (which on some sites account for over 99 per cent of the total assemblage).[29] The latter form of pottery is notoriously difficult to date; its undistinctive forms, which changed little over time from Roman to early medieval times, are all but impossible to arrange in a reliable series. By examining the scarce but more easily datable terra nigra sherds, Mildenberger was able to construct a more accurate picture of settlement patterns from the first to fifth centuries AD. He concluded that long-term settlement was not the norm in the Chatti heartland during the Roman period. Sites were often abandoned after three or four generations, and only one of the twelve known sites reliably dated to the first century survived until the fifth.[30]

Mildenberger's careful study of the pottery evidence produced empirical evidence to refute the theory of a large-scale population shift, leading him to the stern conclusion that 'there is no question of [mass] settlement abandonment'.[31] Rather, settlements were abandoned one by one over time, perhaps only to be re-founded very close by. In general, too, Mildenberger argued that finds from other parts of Hessia are too few in number to imply even a long-term decline in population: other factors, such as a decline in the custom of furnished burials, a reduction in datable Roman wares, and the increasing likelihood of late and post-Roman settlements being hidden beneath their medieval successors, all contribute to an apparent lack of 'migration period' finds.[32]

Some prominent Hessian archaeologists have disagreed with Mildenberger's conclusion that post-Roman migration from north Hesse was negligible, notably Roth and Gensen, both of whom argued that a gradual population shift during

---

[28] G. Mildenberger, 'Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen', *FH*, 12 (1972), 104–26. The prominent Marburg archaeologist Otto Uenze, shortly before his death in an accident in 1962, was also beginning to question the dominant theory that the Chatti migrated south after the fall of the *limes*. See Mildenberger's comments following Uenze's posthumously published article: O. Uenze, 'Volkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber aus Nordhessen', *FH*, 11 (1971), 80–94 (p. 94).

[29] Mildenberger, 'Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen', p. 112.

[30] Mildenberger, *Römerzeitliche Siedlungen*, Tabelle 3.

[31] 'Von eine Siedlungsleere kann keine Rede sein': Mildenberger, 'Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen', p. 109.

[32] Mildenberger, 'Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen', p. 109; G. Mildenberger, 'Nordhessen in der Völkerwanderungszeit', *HJL*, 16 (1966), 1–8 (p. 6).

and after the third century towards the Main-Rhine region, a fulcrum of post-Roman political power, was very likely.[33] More recently, Böhme has argued that there is no evidence for any large-scale change in population between the Roman and early medieval periods, although he does not rule out some degree of population movement.[34] We must be cautious of accepting either case based merely on a lack of evidence for the other.[35] Whether or not a sizeable part of the population shifted south after the fall of the Rhine frontier, the north was certainly not left deserted, and it is reasonable to assume that many of the eighth-century inhabitants of the region were direct descendants of those of the third. This does not mean, however, that the cultural practices of the Hessians of Boniface's day had remained unchanged for five centuries, or that the Hessians themselves viewed their own history with this kind of temporal depth.

## The Antiquity of Pagan Activity in the Fritzlar District

Archaeological, toponymical, and historical evidence all suggest that the vicinity of Fritzlar was a focus of religious activity from the first century at the latest. By the eighth century this activity was focused in part at Geismar, one of the few Roman-period settlements that were occupied continuously into the early medieval period, which lies 2 kilometres west of Fritzlar and was excavated between 1973 and 1980.[36] Although the bulk of the archaeological material was Carolingian in date, the excavation revealed traces of a Roman-period predecessor,

[33] H. Roth, 'Frühmittelalterliche Archäologie', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 22–33 (pp. 32–33); R. Gensen, 'Die Frühgeschichte des Fritzlaren Raumes', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 10–40.

[34] Böhme, 'Franken in Althessen', p. 88.

[35] Werner Best, who himself keeps an open mind on the issue, discusses it further in *Funde der Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit*, pp. 1–2.

[36] Two other sites in central Hessia whose settlement continued from the Roman period into the eighth century are Holzheim, 2.5 km south of Fritzlar, and Obervorschütz, 6 km north-west of Fritzlar. On Holzheim, see N. Wand, 'Archäologische Untersuchungen des Kirchhofbereiches St Thomas in der Dorfwüstung Holzheim bei Fritzlar (Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) im Jahre 1980', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen in Hessen, Band 1*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 7, ed. by K. Sippel (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpfege Hessen, 1989), pp. 47–75 (p. 48); *Holzheim bei Fritzlar*, ed. by Wand, pp. 58–61; Schotten, Wand, and Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen', pp. 241–42. On Obervorschütz, see Mildenberger, *Römerzeitliche Siedlungen*, p. 109.

founded around the fifth century BC and continuing throughout the Roman period, with a possible decrease in size between the fourth and fifth centuries.[37] Especially interesting was the evidence for bronze-working: this was a valuable trade whose practitioners must have been highly esteemed,[38] and a skilled crafts-man in Geismar may have served an elite which controlled Büraburg across the river Eder. The excavations at Geismar also produced intact burials of a horse and dog, which Gensen suggested may have been sacrificial in nature,[39] and a small (6.5 cm) Roman bronze figurine which Schoppa describes as a statue of the Graeco-Egyptian god Harpocrates. Such a find is highly unusual beyond the Roman frontier, and the fact that it was not melted down may suggest that it retained some symbolic or totemic significance and was associated with religious activity at Geismar. Whether it came to Hessia through trade, tribute, or booty there is no reason to assume that the locals identified it with the god it originally depicted as opposed to a local deity or spirit.[40]

If there was a religious cult at Geismar, it was presumably related to a natural mineral spring, recorded in 1350 as *Heilgenborn*,[41] which lies 1.5 kilometres to the north-west and flowed through the middle of the settlement. Werner Guth derives the name *Geismar* from a proto-Indo-European root word *\*ghei-s*, 'to hurry, move energetically', and OHG *\*mari*, 'pool'.[42] The name thus appears to refer to the mineral waters flowing from Heilgenborn, which itself approximates to 'holy/health-giving spring' (from OHG *heilig* and *born*). Tacitus records a battle fought *c.* AD 58 between the Chatti and the neighbouring Hermanduri, who inhabited what is now Thuringia, over control of a salt water spring which

---

[37] Thiedmann, *Die Siedlung von Geismar*, pp. 12–15.

[38] H. Roth, 'Bronzeherstellung und -verarbeitung während der späten römischen Kaiserzeit in Geismar bei Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis, und Altendorf bei Bamberg (Oberfranken)', *FH*, 19/20 (1979/80), 795–806 (p. 804).

[39] Gensen, *Die chattische Großsiedlung*, p. 11.

[40] H. Schoppa, 'Eine Bronzestatuette des Harpokrates aus Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *FH*, 14 (1974), 349–51.

[41] W. Guth, 'Ortswüstungen und andere wüste Siedelstellen bei Niedenstein-Kirchberg', *ZHG*, 109 (2004), 51–70 (pp. 66–70); W. Küther, *Historiches Ortslexikon des Landes Hessen*, 5 vols to date (Marburg: Elwert, 1980– ), II, 263.

[42] Guth, 'Ortswüstungen', pp. 66–68; see p. 66 n. 82 on the purported OHG verb *gîsan*, 'to gush, spray', cited in the case of Geismar by Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 229, which appears to be an invention of Jacob Grimm; also J. Udolph, Namenkundliches contribution to 'Geismar', in *RGA*, X (1998), 584–86.

flowed into a river between their territories.[43] The Chatti regarded this spring as being particularly sacred. They believed, Tacitus wrote, that 'these places are especially close to heaven, that mortal prayers to the gods are nowhere better heard, and that salt is produced in that stream and forest by divine munificence'.[44] If Geismar was also known for the healing properties of its mineral waters during the Roman period, as the evidence seems to suggest, then this may have led to its development as one focus of elite settlement and religious activity.

The true heart of Chatti territory, however, lay immediately to the east, in the Fritzlar basin. As already mentioned, Mattium, which Tacitus describes as the main settlement or political centre of the Chatti, was razed in AD 15 by the Roman general Germanicus. Becker points out that, according to Strabo, Germanicus's triumphal procession in Rome in AD 17 included a 'priest of the Chatti' named Libes who was presumably captured at the destruction of Mattium.[45] Although Mattium was clearly north of the Eder and various attempts have been made to link it etymologically with the villages of Metze and Maden to the north-east of Fritzlar,[46] it is still disputed whether Tacitus was referring to a fortified settlement,[47] a single place of political or religious assembly, or, as Karl Demandt suggested, the district as a whole.[48] The existence of an ancient religious centre near Maden is made more likely by four factors: first, its location beside the basalt

[43] The battle may have been fought over the major salt springs at Bad Sooden on the Werra, which still lies on the border between Hesse and Thuringia. Charlemagne donated saltworks at Bad Sooden to the monastery of Fulda between 768 and 779. *UBF*, no. 140, pp. 198–99.

[44] '[E]os maxime locos propinquare caelo precesque mortalium a deis nusquam propius audiri. inde indulgentia numinum illo in amne illisque silvis [s]alem provenire': Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ed. by H. Furneaux, H. F. Pelham, and C. D. Fisher, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906–07), XIII. 57 (II, 228, ll. 2–4).

[45] Becker, 'Mattium', p. 444. Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, ed. and trans. by H. L. Jones, 8 vols (London: Heinemann, 1917–32), VII. 1. 4 (III, 292).

[46] See W. Guth, 'Onomastische Überlegungen zu einem historischen Problem', *ZHG*, 113 (2008), 1–16, for a discussion of the debate.

[47] Altenburg, a Roman-period fortified hill 12 km north of Fritzlar, was suggested as the site of Mattium until excavations showed that it had been destroyed around the middle of the first century BC, long before the Roman invasion. See J. Bergmann, *Die Altenburg bei Niedenstein*, Führer zur nordhessischen Ur- und Frühgeschichte, 1 (Kassel: Hessisches Landesmuseum, 1965), pp. 14–15; G. Mildenberger, 'Das Ende der Altenburg bei Niedenstein', in *Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie der Kelten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Dehn*, ed. by O. H. Frey (Bonn: Habelt, 1969), pp. 122–34 (pp. 133–34); Mildenberger, *Römerzeitliche Siedlungen*, p. 102.

[48] Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 85.

Map 7. Modern field boundaries at Maden. These boundaries preserve a circular block of territory defined by rivers to the south and west and high wooded ground to the north and east, with the Maderstein outcrop and church of St Peter at the centre.

outcrop of Gudensberg, which derives its name from the Germanic god Woden; second, the presence within the village of a two-metre-high prehistoric quartz megalith known colloquially as *Wotanstein* (Fig. 3);[49] third, the location of the oldest and highest medieval court in Hessia on Mader Heide, a low rise to the east of the village;[50] fourth, the arrangement of field boundaries around the village, which clearly indicates its long-standing centrality within the wider landscape (Map 7). In relation to Boniface's mission, the dedication of Maden's church to St Peter and its parochial independence until the sixteenth century both speak for a very early foundation.[51]

[49] The first textual reference to the stone is from 1407, where it is referred to as 'der lange steyn zu Madin'.

[50] In the eleventh century, the entirety of Hessia was known as the Grafschaft (county) of Maden, and the court continued to meet on Mader Heide until the thirteenth century. Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, pp. 168, 191. See Chapter 7, below, pp. 295–307.

[51] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 331–41.

Fig. 3. The Wotanstein at Maden.

Geismar and Maden thus appear to have been centres of religious activity as early as the first century, and it seems that central Hessia saw a considerable degree of cultural continuity between the Roman and Frankish periods. It may well be that some features of the pagan religion which Boniface encountered during his mission, not only in Geismar and Maden but elsewhere in Hessia, had extremely ancient roots. It will help us appreciate the complexity of the task Boniface set himself when we consider that aspects of cult worship had been tightly woven into the evolving sociocultural fabric of the Hessian population through a dozen or more generations.

## The Expansion of Frankish Influence in Hessia, 600–721

### Phase 1: Frankish Consolidation in the South to 650

During the sixth and seventh centuries, a scattering of historical references, only three of which concern the regions bordering Hessia, present an incomplete and poorly detailed picture of Frankish expansion east of the middle Rhine. First, Gregory of Tours gave an account of the murder of the nobleman Sigibert by his ambitious son when he set out hunting from Cologne to the forest of Buchonia around 500:

> Seduced by this greed, [Chodovic] plotted to murder his father. When [Sigibert] decided to leave the city of Cologne and cross the Rhine into the forest of Buchonia, and was sleeping at midday in his tent, his son sent assassins and had him killed so that he might possess the kingdom.[52]

In the mid-eighth century, Buchonia referred to the district of Boniface's foundation at Fulda,[53] which was the site of a high-status fortification in the Merovingian period;[54] if the extent of sixth-century Buchonia was similar, Gregory's account would suggest that the region to the south of Hessia, at least, was sufficiently secure for the Frankish elite to use it for their hunting expeditions.

---

[52] 'Qua ille cupiditate seductus, patrem molitur occidere. Cumque ille egressus de Colonia civitate, transacto Rheno, per Buconiam silvam ambulare disponeret, meridiae in tenturia sua obdormiens, inmissis super eum filius percussoribus eum ibidem interfecit, tamquam regnum illius possessurus': Gregory of Tours, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum X*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH, SS rer. Merov., 1.1 (1937), II. 40 (p. 90, ll. 1–5).

[53] See Pope Zacharias's 751 charter of papal exemption for Fulda: Tangl, ep. 89a, p. 204, l. 2.

[54] See pp. 157–68, below.
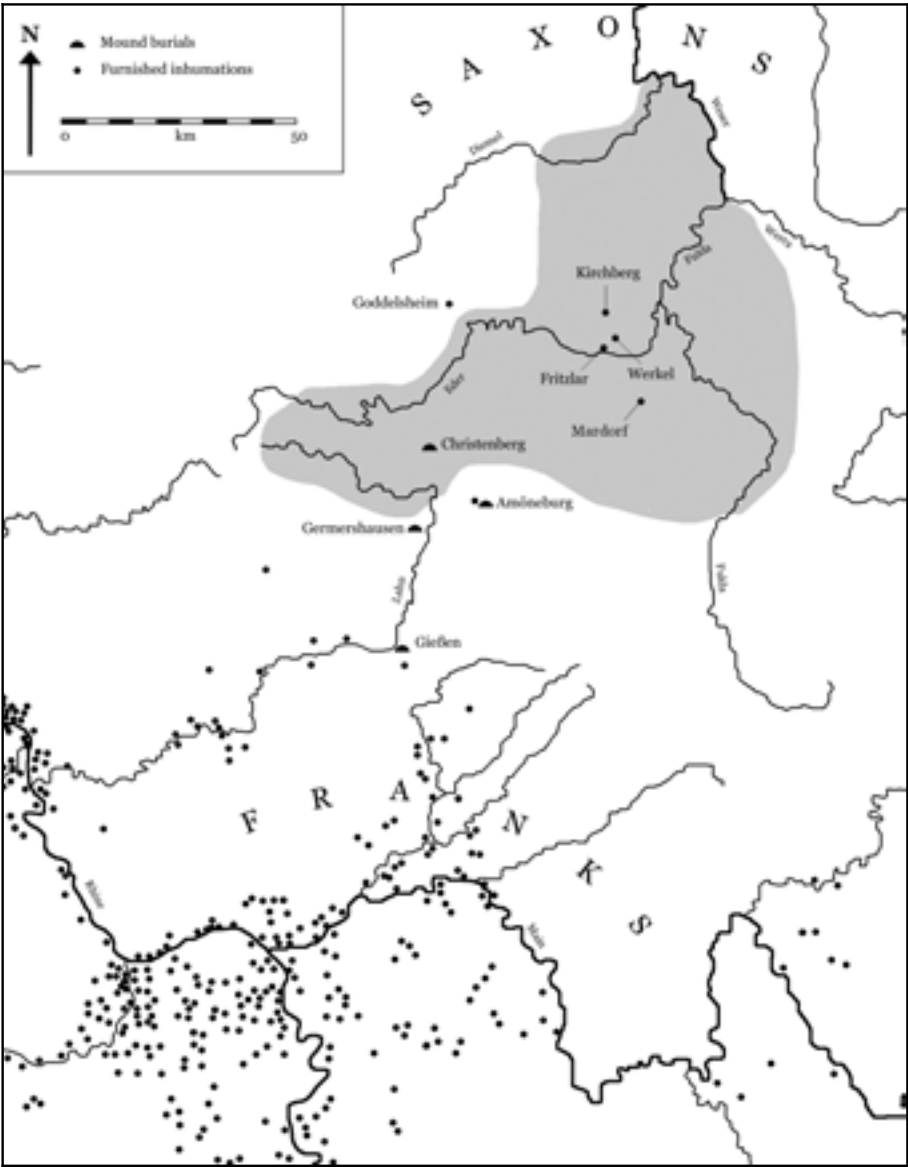
Map 8. Frankish *Reihengräberfelder*. The distribution is densest in the Rhine-Main, with a few outliers in the lower Lahn valley and central Hessia.

The second reference concerning Hessia is the conquest of Thuringia by Clovis's sons Theoderic and Clothar in 531, for this implies that the Franks had a degree of overlordship north of the Main before 600.[55] Third, when Sigebert III raised an army to crush a rebellion in Thuringia in 639, his army included, according to a contemporary entry in the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, 'peoples from all the territories of his realm across the Rhine',[56] which may have included Hessia. Fredegar also stated that Sigebert fought a battle before heading to Thuringia via Buchonia.[57] This battle, if it was fought after crossing the Rhine and before reaching Thuringia, must have taken place immediately south of Hessia, perhaps in the Wetterau or Rhön, and suggests that Merovingian control of the region eighty years before Boniface's mission was not entirely secure.[58] Judging from these few references, it seems that the Franks exercised a degree of overlordship in Buchonia and among the peoples immediately north of the Main from the early sixth century at the latest.[59]

Archaeological evidence supports this impression that the areas south of Hessia were politically and culturally closely tied to the Rhine-Main region, while Hessia itself was not. Map 8 shows the distribution of Merovingian period *Reihengräberfelder* (row-grave cemeteries) along the middle Rhine, lower Main, Wetterau, and Lahn valley. The term *Reihengräberfelder* is used to describe the custom of furnished inhumations arranged in large cemeteries which began in north-east Gaul in the later fourth century, and which spread up the Rhine into Bavaria and down into southern Gaul until it finally fell from use in the late seventh and early eighth century. There is a large literature concerning the interpretation of these burials and their furnishings, in which questions of religious, social, and ethnic signification are dominant.[60] While there are no burial

---

[55] Gregory of Tours recounts the invasion: Gregory of Tours, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum*, III. 7 (p. 103, l. 14, to p. 105, l. 20).

[56] '[G]entes undique de universis regni sui pagis ultra Rhenum': *Fred. Cont.*, p. 164, l. 26.

[57] '[D]einde Buchoniam cum exercitu transiens, Thoringiam properans': *Fred. Cont.*, p. 164, l. 31.

[58] Schwind, 'Zur Geschichte des heute hessischen Raumes', p. 37.

[59] K. Kunter, 'Baggerfunde aus der Lahnaue bei Heuchelheim/Dutenhofen als Beitrag zur Besiedlungsgeschichte des Gießen-Wetzlarer Raumes', *FH*, 22/23 (1982/83), 120–27; Schwind, 'Die Franken in Hessen', p. 220.

[60] The relevant studies of this Continental phenomenon include H. Steuer, 'Zur Bewaffnung und Sozialstruktur der Merowingerzeit', *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte*, 37 (1968), 18–87; R. Christlein, 'Besitzabstufungen zur Merowingerzeit im Spiegel reicher Grabfunde aus West- und Süddeutschland', *Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums*, 20 (1973),

sites east of the Rhine (or indeed anywhere) that can be compared to the five thousand excavated graves of Krefeld-Gellep,[61] much of the material found in the furnished inhumations of the middle Rhine is similar to that from the lower Rhine region.[62] The difference lies principally in quantity, among the most thoroughly excavated sites east of the Rhine being the 526 graves of Griesheim south of the Main,[63] the 136 graves of Nieder-Erlenbach, just north of Frankfurt,[64] and the 120 graves of Klein-Welzheim, east of Frankfurt.[65]

*Reihengräber* burials are, almost without exception, supine, and the rows are typically arranged with the heads lying towards the west. The most common grave

---

147–80; U. Koch, 'Grabräuber als Zeugen frühen Christentums', *Archäologische Nachrichten aus Baden*, 11 (1973), 22–26; L. Pauli, 'Heidnisches und Christliches im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern', *Bayerisches Vorgeschichtsblatt*, 43 (1978), 147–57; R. Christlein, *Die Alamannen: Archäologie eines lebendigen Volkes* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1978); E. James, 'Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul', in *Names, Words and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), pp. 55–89; H. Härke, 'Intentionale und funktionale Daten: Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Methode der Gräberarchäologie', *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 23 (1993), 141–46; A. Schülke, 'Die "Christianisierung" als Forschungsproblem der Südwestdeutschen Gräberarchäologie', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 27/28 (1999/2000), 85–117; G. Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West* (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1995), pp. 9–15; G. Halsall, 'Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier: The So-called "Föderatengräber" Reconsidered', in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, Denkschriften der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 287 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), pp. 167–80; B. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

[61] For further references, see Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*, pp. 204–07.

[62] On the *Reihengräber* of the lower Rhine, see F. Siegmund, *Merowingerzeit am Niederrhein: Die frühmittelalterlichen Funde aus dem Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf und dem Kreis Heinsberg*, Rheinische Ausgrabungen, 34 (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 1998); U. Müssemeier and others, *Chronologie der merowingerzeitlichen Grabfunde vom linken Niederrhein bis zur nördlichen Eifel*, Materialien zur Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland, 15 (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 2003).

[63] 'Fundchronik für die Jahre 1981 bis 1985' [catalogue of reported archaeological finds], ed. by F.-R. Herrmann and O. Kriesel, *FH*, 26 (1986), 1–825 (p. 462).

[64] 'Fundchronik für die Jahre 1986 bis 1990' [catalogue of reported archaeological finds], ed. by F.-R. Herrmann and O. Kriesel, *FH*, 31 (1991), 1–692 (p. 378).

[65] 'Fundchronik für die Jahre 1986 bis 1990', p. 384; 'Fundchronik für die Jahre 1981 bis 1985', p. 472; 'Fundchronik des Landesarchäologen von Hessen für die Jahre 1971 und 1972' [catalogue of reported archaeological finds], ed. by F.-R. Herrmann and I. Schmidt, *FH*, 13 (1972), 229–409 (p. 333); E. Wamers, 'Kat. 50: Wadenbindengarnitur', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 130–31.

goods include pottery vessels, the large cruciform brooches of the fifth and sixth centuries (gradually superseded by circular disc brooches in the seventh), bead necklaces of stone, glass, and bone, belt buckles, bone combs, small knives and other utensils, and weaponry such as swords, lances, spears, shields, and axes of various sizes.[66] Most burial sites, particularly those which have been subject to extensive robbing in the past, produce very few surviving grave goods. A typical example is the cemetery at Karben-Okarben in the southern Wetterau, which was heavily robbed in antiquity: 36 graves were identified at this site, of which 13 were excavated and only 3 revealed furnishings (including two blades and a cruciform brooch).[67] The *Reihengräber* cemeteries of the Wetterau and the lower Lahn demonstrate that these regions shared a close cultural affinity, at least regarding burial rite, with the Frankish heartlands. This impression is reinforced by the seventh-century *Ravennatis cosmographia*, in which the river Lahn is recorded as part of the *patria Francorum*,[68] while the ecclesiastical history of the Lahn also suggests long-standing, pre-Bonifatian ties to the archdiocese of Trier.[69]

With regard to Hessia itself, our sources remain silent. It is a guess, if an educated one, to say that the very lack of references to Hessian campaigns means that local rulers in the region generally accepted Frankish overlordship without any resistance that chroniclers deemed worthy of mention.[70] The state of the evidence allows us to surmise only a lack of historically attested, archaeologically visible military activity, not a void of any military or political activity whatsoever. In short, we are left very much in the dark with regard to the political situation in Hessia up to the mid-seventh century, except to say that by this time the Franks were well established on its southern borders and were about to extend their influence northwards.

---

[66] See *Hessen im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 95–173, for an illustrated catalogue of early medieval grave objects and assemblages from Hesse.

[67] 'Fundchronik für die Jahre 1981 bis 1985', pp. 466–67; H.-W. Böhme and others, *Karben-Okarben, Wetteraukreis — Grabfunde des 6.–7. Jahrhunderts: Ausgrabungen in einem fränkischen Friedhof in der südlichen Wetterau*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 56 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1987).

[68] *Itineraria Romana*, II: *Ravennatis anonymi cosmographia et Guidonis geographica*, ed. by J. Schnetz (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1942), *Cosmographia*, V. 4. 24.

[69] For full discussion, see K. E. Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit', *HJL*, 3 (1953), 35–56 (pp. 48–49); Kunter, 'Baggerfund aus der Lahnaue', p. 124; F. Backhaus, 'Besitzkarte frühkarolingische Klöster', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 44–50, Karte 9.

[70] For example, Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', p. 61.

The clearest archaeological difference between Hessia and the Frankish south lies in the evidence for burial, and is worth further consideration. The conspicuous absence of any *Reihengräber*-style burials in Hessia before *c.* 650 is most likely attributable to the widespread use of unfurnished cremation, a rite that leaves almost no archaeological trace, especially when the ashes are not buried in pots. Cremation appears to have been a common means of disposing of the dead in pre-Christian Saxony,[71] and its probable use in Hessia indicates certain cultural links to the north rather than to the Frankish south. Although we should not ignore important regional variations or potential differences in meaning and use of material culture within the *Reihengräber* tradition of the middle Rhine,[72] these appear insignificant compared to the near-total absence of the tradition in Hessia.

The furnished inhumations of the Wetterau and the Lahn valley were not a relatively late expansion into the fringes of Frankish territory, for many of the richest examples date from the fifth and early sixth century, and the custom continued until the eighth. While we must be wary of making simplistic equations between burial practice and ethnic identity,[73] it is apparent that a highly visible divide in burial custom existed between Hessia and the regions to the south for at least two hundred years. Only a profound difference in the nature of mortuary behaviour and its role in social communication can explain this contrast, and only a determination among both Franks and Hessians to maintain it can explain its longevity. Such a contrast may indeed reflect a deep resistance by the peoples of Hessia to adopting 'Frankish' culture in general, a 'refusal to borrow', to use

---

[71] Tacitus reports on the prevalent custom of cremation in first-century Germania: Tacitus, *Germania* chap. 27, p. 50, ll. 23–24. Cremation of the dead according to pagan custom was punishable by death according to Charlemagne's Saxon Capitulary (775–90). Anon., *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by E. Boretius, in MGH Capit., 1 (1883), pp. 68–70 (chap. 7, p. 69, ll. 3–4). On the archaeological evidence for Saxon burial customs, see F. Siegmund, 'Social Relations among the Old Saxons', in *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century*, ed. by D. H. Green and F. Siegmund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 77–95.

[72] For a discussion of the theoretical considerations, see I. Hodder, 'The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 1994), pp. 393–402 (p. 398).

[73] For a pertinent discussion of Frankish and Alamannic ethnic identity in the context of burial archaeology, see S. Brather and H.-P. Wotzka, 'Alemannen und Franken? Bestattungsmodi, ethnische Identitäten und wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse zur Merowingerzeit', in *Soziale Gruppen — kulturelle Grenzen: Die Interpretation sozialer Identitäten in der prähistorischen Archäologie*, ed. by S. Burmeister and N. Müller-Scheeßel (Berlin: Waxmann, 2006), pp. 139–224 (pp. 139–45).

Fernand Braudel's term;[74] and if this is the case, then the relatively sudden appearance of mid-seventh-century Merovingian furnished burials in central Hessia around Fritzlar, not on the long-standing fringe of the *Reihengräber* tradition around Amöneburg or the upper Lahn, is doubly noteworthy.

## Phase 2: Frankish Overlordship in Hessia, 650–90

If we look a little more closely at the interface between furnished inhumations and unfurnished cremation, along the upper Lahn valley we find a small but significant number of mound inhumations that are unlike anything else in the region, and which may be symptomatic of social and political tension related to Frankish expansionism. There are six known seventh-century mounds in the wooded hills overlooking Gießen and nine near Germershausen, with another two larger groups near Kesterburg farther north and a number near Amöneburg. Hermann Ament discussed these cemeteries in the wider context of Merovingian burial mounds: more than two dozen broadly contemporary mound cemetery sites are known in the Alamannic region along the upper Rhine, with more along the upper Danube and in north-west Bavaria, three west of the middle Rhine and a number in Saxony.[75]

The six mounds in the wooded hills overlooking Gießen were excavated between 1898 and 1909. In 1898 four mounds were excavated, two of which were found to contain La Téne period finds (fifth to first centuries BC), and two Merovingian (fifth to seventh centuries AD).[76] In 1907 a further mound, some 20 to 30 metres distant, was excavated, revealing four cremation burials placed within wheel-turned pots normally associated with domestic, rather than funerary, archaeological contexts.[77] A third campaign in 1909 opened a sixth

---

[74] F. Braudel, *On History*, trans. by S. Matthews (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 203.

[75] H. Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 63–93. He does not mention the mound burials in Brücker Wald near Amöneburg, perhaps because the lack of grave goods makes determining their age difficult.

[76] G. Gundermann, 'Ausgrabungsbericht', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 7 (1899), 207–24; O. Kunkel, *Oberhessens vorgeschichtliche Altertümer* (Marburg: Elwert, 1926), p. 211.

[77] K. Kramer, 'Gießen B: Frühfränkische Gräber auf dem Exerzierplatz', *Römisch-germanisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 1 (1908), 17–19; Kramer, 'Bericht des Konservators', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 16 (1908), 93–101; H. Zeiß, 'Hessische Brandbestattungen der

mound, 6 to 7 metres in diameter, which contained a single supine, west-east oriented burial beneath an elaborate stone packing.[78] The burial exposed in 1909 was richly furnished, although many of the finds are now lost. They included glass beads, dress fittings, and strap-ends, a decorated disc and a fragmentary ring. These goods, typical of Frankish *Reihengräber*, were complemented by four pottery vessels of unusual form which bore impressed patterns frequently found on seventh-century middle-Rhine ceramics.[79] In the woodland near Germershausen, 20 kilometres to the north of Gießen, three of nine known mounds were opened in 1864, followed by two more in 1877. The mounds were fairly regular in size, approximately 1.5 metres high and 60 paces in cir-cumference.[80] The first three mounds contained the remains of cremations, one of which also contained a fragment of a silver brooch; of the two final mounds, both also cremations, one contained a long saxe and arrowheads, the other a small spearhead.[81]

Another 20 kilometres north of Germershausen, overlooking the Weinstraße, are two groups of burial mounds, each along a crest of high ground about 350 metres removed from the late seventh-century Frankish fortification of Kester-burg. The high ground is marked on Map 9, although there is no published survey plan of the mounds themselves. To the south-east are ten mounds on a rise known as the Lichten Heide, while along the Klutzkopf ridge to the north-west are at least thirty-seven. The area is now covered in dense woodland, but these ridges would have been stripped of trees when the mounds were constructed.

---

jüngeren Merowingerzeit', *Germania*, 18 (1934), 279–84; H. Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', p. 74; K. Sippel, 'Kat. 127: Hügelgrab mit Brandbestattungen', in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 191.

[78] K. Kramer, 'Bericht des Konservators', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 18 (1910), 137–45; K. Kramer, 'Gießen: Fränkisches Grab auf dem Exerzierplatz', *Römisch-germanisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 3 (1910), 4–6; K. Kramer, 'Fränkische Funde aus dem ober-hessischen Museum und den gailischen Sammlungen zu Gießen', *Volk und Scholle*, 3 (1925), 202–03; K. Sippel, 'Kat. 126: Hügelgrab mit Körperbestattung', in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 190.

[79] K. Sippel, 'Kat. 24: Frauengrab unter einem Hügel', in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 109.

[80] Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', p. 73.

[81] Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', p. 73; E. Pinder, *Bericht über die heidnischen Altertümer der ehemals kurhessischen Provinzen Fulda, Oberhessen*, Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, Supp. 6 (Kassel: Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1878).
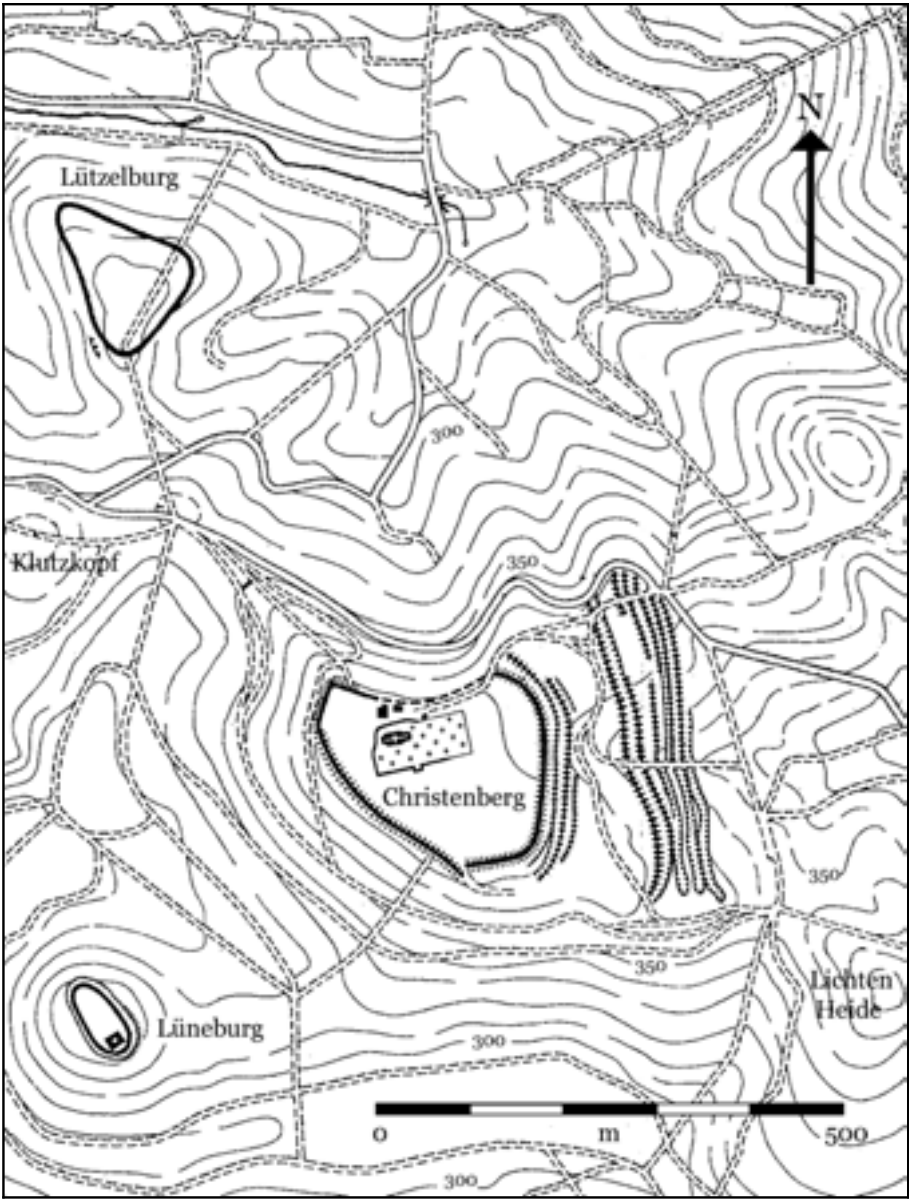
Map 9. The Kesterburg district. Christenberg is the name of the hill on which Kesterburg stands; Lützelburg and Lüneburg are prehistoric forts; the early medieval mound burial cemeteries are on Klutzkopf and Lichten Heide.

Between 1964 and 1969 all of the Lichten Heide and seven of the Klutzkopf mounds were excavated.[82] All of the mounds, where they survived to a sufficient degree, were encircled by a shallow ditch.[83] Although no skeletal material survived in the sandy natural soil of the Lichten Heide, two of the mounds covered small (1.2 × 0.8m) east-west grave cuts, the size of which indicates that they probably contained children. One of these graves also contained a large throwing axe. Of the remaining Lichten Heide mounds, four contained grave assemblages, respectively: a firesteel and iron knife; an iron knife, brooch, and two temple rings; an iron brooch and buckle; three buckles.

In the chalky soil of the Klutzkopf the skeletons were preserved to a much higher degree and were all aligned east-west. Three of the mounds contained single burials, two contained double burials, and another two contained triple burials. One single burial included a complete assemblage of bead necklace, buckle, knife, further iron objects, and the remains of a brooch of the second half of the seventh century. Goods from the other graves, though largely robbed in antiquity, included two buckles.[84] Gensen's dating of the two Kesterburg mound cemeteries to the late seventh century rests principally on the three brooches described above, and none of the other recovered grave goods appear to contradict this.

Finally, a cemetery of twenty-five mound burials in the forest of Brücker Wald 2 kilometres east of Amöneburg was excavated at least four times in the nineteenth century, in 1920 and again in 1968. The mounds varied greatly in size, between 0.3 and 1.3 metres in height, and during the numerous investigations revealed both inhumations and cremations, but no dateable grave goods. At Rüdigheim 1 kilometre to the south, however, another barrow was found to contain a cremation along with pottery and a disc brooch that could be dated to the late seventh or early eighth century.[85]

Due to the high visibility of the mounds at these various sites, they were the frequent targets of antiquarian curiosity from the nineteenth century onwards,

---

[82] K. Sippel, 'Kat. 129: Hügelgräber mit Körperbestattungen', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 193; Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken', pp. 140–43; R. Gensen, 'Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen und seine Bedeutung', *HJL*, 18 (1968), 14–26 (pp. 21–22).

[83] Sippel, 'Kat. 129', p. 193.

[84] Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken', pp. 140–43; Gensen, 'Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen', p. 22.

[85] Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit*, p. 74; Sippel, *Die frühmittelalterliche Grabfunde*, pp. 18–25.

and with the exception of Kesterburg have suffered from high levels of disturbance, poor recording, and limited publication; here I have attempted to provide a summary of the available literature. Nonetheless it is clear that, beyond the use of the mound itself, these mound burials diverge in several ways from each other as well as from Merovingian burial mounds in general. The variety of customs they display, first of all, means that we cannot regard them as a single coherent tradition. Ament describes them as a mixture of influences: the furnishings are similar to those in Alamannic burial mounds, whereas the cremations recall Saxon custom and the local pottery forms are distinct from either; there is, furthermore, considerable variation in the size and number of mounds at each site, and Kesterburg is the only site with ring ditches.[86] It is equally important to note that there is no evidence for a gradual development of an early medieval burial mound tradition along the Lahn valley.[87] Instead, the custom appears suddenly around the early to mid-seventh century and disappears almost as suddenly around 700 — probably within two or three generations, and still within living memory.

We can ask the same questions here as we did of the broadly contemporary Anglo-Saxon burial mounds of the Wiltshire Downs: why did these mounds appear then, and why there?[88] Cremation appears to have been the dominant form of burial between the Wetterau and the Diemel long before the seventh century, and therefore we need not assume that the moment it becomes archaeologically visible it is a result of 'Saxon' influence. As regards 'Alamannic' influence, the

[86] Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', pp. 89–90. A similar mixture of customs that defy simple categorization is evident at the Frankish-period cemetery of Goddelsheim, 30 km north along the Weinstraße from Kesterberg, which was partially excavation in 1934. Two supine, furnished inhumations could be dated to the sixth and seventh centuries. Each resembled the *Reihengräber* of the middle Rhine with regard to grave goods, but their north-south alignment, typical of contemporary inhumations in Saxony (where cremation was the dominant rite), contrasted with the predominantly west-east orientation of Rhineland burials. Ceramics from the graves bore a closer resemblance to Saxon pottery than Frankish in their form and decoration, also suggesting links to the north. See H. J. Hundt, 'Neue Funde aus dem fränkischen Reihengräberfeld in Goddelsheim', *Hessenland*, 48 (1937), 307–15; Mildenberger, 'Nordhessen', pp. 4–5; Böhme, 'Franken oder Sachsen?', pp. 68–71; K. Sippel, 'Thüringische Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters in Osthessen: Archäologishe Quellen zur Westausdehnung thüringischer Besiedlung in karolingischer Zeit', in *Aspekte thüringisch-hessischer Geschichte*, ed. by M. Gockel (Marburg: Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliches Landeskunde, 1992), pp. 29–48 (p. 33).

[87] In contrast to Alamannic regions, for example: see Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', p. 86.

[88] See Chapter 3, above, pp. 92–97; Carver, 'Why That?', p. 4.

furnishings of the mound burials are essentially a continuation of what had been practised in the Wetterau and the Lahn valley for two centuries. The chief reason, indeed, to look to either Saxon or Alamannic regions as sources of inspiration for the mound burials appears to be not the contents of the mounds, but the mounds themselves — and there is no reason to look beyond Hessia for that inspiration. Just between Gießen and Limburg, 50 kilometres to the west, are at least 824 prehistoric mounds in seventy-eight separate sites,[89] while there are also high concentrations in the Wetterau and along the lower Main, especially between the Vogelsberg and the Fulda, and a scattering across Hessia.[90]

Ament, observing the proximity of these prehistoric mounds, suggested that they had retained a distinct aura of dignity and monumentality from the Bronze Age, and that this aura drew the seventh-century locals towards them when they needed to bury their own dead.[91] Yet physical continuity alone explains little, for features of the landscape do not have continuous meanings over time: meanings shift and transform, are forgotten and re-invented, according to situation and subject.[92] Rather, we should consider the possibility that such a spatially and temporally restricted phenomenon as the Hessian mound burials arose within a particular context, fulfilled an immediate social and political need, and did not survive beyond that context.[93]

---

[89] H. Janke, 'Grabhügelfunde aus der Umgebung Wetzlars: Fundbestände verschiedener Zeitstellung aus einer Privatsammlung', *FH*, 37/38 (1997/98), 39–127.

[90] Karte 5b in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel.

[91] Ament, 'Merowingische Grabhügel', p. 87.

[92] C. Evans, 'Tradition and the Cultural Landscape: An Archaeology of Place', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 4 (1985), 80–94 (pp. 81–82).

[93] In Sippel's opinion, the cremation mound burials at Germershausen, Gießen, and Amöneburg represent the dominant native Hessian burial tradition of the seventh century. He suggests that the custom was also followed in central Hessia, but that any mounds were ploughed to destruction over the centuries. K. Sippel, archaeological contribution to 'Hessen', in *RGA*, XIV (1999), 497–501 (p. 501). This is possible, although there is no lack of high ground that might have been used for mound burials even in the Fritzlar district, and an Iron Age cemetery of 121 burial mounds survives in the Riederwald, 6 km north of Kirchberg (H. Heintel, 'Ein eisenzeitliches Hügelgräberfeld bei Kirchberg, Kr, Fritzlar-Homberg', *FH*, 2 (1962), 129–40). Furthermore, the Lahn-Amöneburg region, known as the Lahngau in eighth- and ninth-century charters, did not lie within Hessia proper, and traditionally had closer ties to the Frankish heartland; see Kunter, 'Baggerfunde aus der Lahnaue', pp. 120–22, Abb. 16; H. Patze, 'Geschichte des Gießener Raumes von der Völkerwanderung bis zum 17. Jahrhundert', in *Gießen und seine Landschaft in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. by G. Neumann (Gießen: Hess, 1970), pp. 65–108 (p. 69). This political and cultural orientation may be sufficient explanation for the lack of mound burials in Hessia itself.

The context in question is surely related to the expansion of Frankish influence towards the north. That the mid- to late seventh century saw significant changes in power structures along the Lahn is very likely. The mound burials at Gießen, Germershausen, and Kesterburg, I would argue, are symptoms of significant social and political upheavals that were closely related to political changes in Hessia. It would be too simple to explain the mound burials as the result of religious confrontation, although religion may well have been one factor among many. Böhme has argued that the early medieval mound burials of the Rhine valley arose in reaction to the gradual advance of Christianity,[94] and Carver has suggested that a similar phenomenon influenced the adoption of mound burials in parts of pagan Anglo-Saxon England.[95] Such an explanation falters at Kesterburg, where the largest mound cemeteries in the area, lining a pair of ridges beneath the Frankish ramparts and containing diagnostic Rhineland furnishings, appear to have served the earliest population of the Frankish fort. Since this population was probably Frankish, hence Christian, the mounds cannot represent a reaction against the advance of Christianity.[96]

Elites of all societies, to some extent, invent or re-invent traditions in order to legitimize their position, introducing 'sets of practices' which reinforce the present through the authority of the past, particularly during times of social stress and uncertainty.[97] Monuments, because of their visibility, are commonly used for this purpose, in the early medieval period as well as in our own day, as recent archaeological studies have argued.[98] People in the early medieval period certainly

[94] H.-W. Böhme, 'Adelsgräber im Frankenreich: Archäologische Zeugnisse zur Herausbildung einer Herrenschicht unter den merowingischen Königen', *Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 40 (1993), 397–534.

[95] Carver, 'Why That?'; Carver, 'Conversion and Politics on the Eastern Seaboard of Britain: Some Archaeological Indicators', in *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. by B. E. Crawford (St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 1998), pp. 11–40.

[96] According to F. Debus, 'Zur Gliederung und Schichtung nordhessischer Ortsnamen', *HJL*, 18 (1968), 27–61 (pp. 27–29), the name of Christenberg, the hill on which Kesterburg stands, itself developed from *Kesterburg* (a tautology from Latin *castellum* and OHG *burg*, both meaning 'fort') through a process of folk etymology, and does not refer to an early community of Christians.

[97] E. Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1–14 (pp. 1–5).

[98] See R. Bradley, *Altering the Earth: The Origins of Monuments in Britain and Continental Europe* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1993), pp. 117–19; R. Bradley, 'Time

knew that prehistoric mounds often held ancient burials, and certain of these mounds remained important as landmarks,[99] perhaps also as sites of folkloric or superstitious significance.[100] Constructing a burial mound beside two ancient barrows created an association with the monuments as well as with the past they embodied: thus the elites at Gießen were claiming legitimacy and authority by rooting themselves into an ancient landscape, perhaps implying or claiming descent from the occupants of the older mounds. Whether or not those performing the burial were indeed 'native' to the region is of little significance;[101] their attitude towards the advancing Frankish powers, however, would be hugely significant in our interpretation of the mounds at Gießen, could we discern it.

The different forms of mound construction, burial deposition, and grave furnishing attested at each site also show that they cannot be treated as the manifestation of a single, fully formed tradition. If anything, they demonstrate the uncertain, conflicting early stages of the 'invention' of a tradition, perhaps brought about by the imminent threat or realization of serious rupture within established social power structures.[102] Nothing in the artefacts can help us determine whether these mounds originated in an attempt by local leaders to resist the encroachment of Frankish control farther up the Lahn valley by expressing their own 'ancestral' right to rule, or whether they were established by a pro-Frankish elite, determined to impress their legitimacy and authority upon

Regained: The Creation of Continuity', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 140 (1987), 1–17 (pp. 14–15); Hood, 'Social Relations', p. 124; Altenberg, *Experiencing Landscapes*, pp. 249–50; B. Effros, 'Monuments and Memory: Repossessing Ancient Remains in Early Medieval Gaul', in *Topographies of Power*, ed. by de Jong, Theuws, and van Rhijn, pp. 93–118 (p. 101).

[99] A late eighth-century boundary charter of Fulda refers to a group of prehistoric burial mounds near Hersfeld as 'ancient tombs', *antiqua sepulchra* (*UBF*, no. 145b, p. 206, l. 3). See Sippel, K., 'Die Grasburg bei Mansbach und benarchbarte Hügelgräber: Untersuchungen an zwei im ausgehenden 8. Jahrhundert genannten Plätzen im Kreis Hersfeld-Rotenburg', *FH*, 17/18 (1977/78), 266–87 (pp. 261–62).

[100] See Bradley, 'Time Regained', p. 14, on Knowth and Newgrange in the Boyne Valley, Ireland, which were both centres of elite activity and subjects of folklore in the medieval period, each role closely related to the other.

[101] Bradley, 'Time Regained', p. 10.

[102] A similar lack of uniformity in burial customs is also typical of contemporary Saxony north of Hessia, concerning which Grünewald laments that 'all attempts so far — my own included — to bring order to the chaos of burial customs [in Saxony], to detect structures or laws, have been condemned as failures'. He suggests that this characteristic reflects the lack of political unity among the inhabitants of the region (C. Grünewald, 'Archäologie des frühen Mittelalters vom 5. bis zum 9. Jahrhundert in Westfalen — ein Überblick', *Archäologie in Ostwestfalen*, 9 (2005), 71–86 (p. 77)).

a fractured and resisting society. The mounds do indicate, however, that the elites of the upper Lahn around the latter half of the seventh century were attempting to protect or consolidate their positions during a period of conflict and uncertainty.

Given the historical context, this may well have been closely related to simultaneous Frankish attempts to establish firmer control of central Hessia. This is evidenced primarily through the appearance from the mid-seventh century of a small number of conspicuous Rhineland-style furnished inhumations in and around Fritzlar. The earliest to be securely dated is a high-status female burial that lay some 150 metres east of Boniface's future monastic foundation. This lone grave, situated on a natural terrace overlooking the Eder, was partially destroyed by construction work in 1972 before being recognized, but enough was excavated to show that it was a burial of unusual wealth and ostentation. The dead woman, wearing a necklace and a fine dress fastened with brooches and ornamented by bronze fittings and strap-ends, was laid in a 1.5-by-2.7-metre wooden grave chamber with her head to the north. Alongside her were placed three lightly decorated pots and possibly some wooden furniture or other apparatus.[103] Although much of the skeleton and presumably a number of grave goods were lost before excavation, the surviving goods, all typical of Rhineland *Reihengräber*, sufficed to date the burial to around the middle of the seventh century.[104]

Further Rhineland-style burials are known in the vicinity, including two from Werkel, several from Mardorf, and nine from Kirchberg. Only one grave was detected during building operations at Werkel in 1958, the existence of a second being inferred from a number of grave-goods found in the construction spoil. The excavated grave contained a supine, west-east oriented inhumation, and included a long sword and lance placed on the right-hand side of the body, a bronze ring, two iron knives, a needle, a buckle, and other unidentified fragments of metal.[105] None of the surviving grave goods allowed for close dating. Uenze's comparison of one of the buckles with late sixth-century examples from Trier was qualified by Mildenberger, who argued that all of the goods from Werkel could be dated to any time between the late sixth and second half of the seventh century.[106]

[103] R. Gensen, 'Ein Frauengrab des 7. Jahrhunderts aus Fritzlar', *FH*, 12 (1972), 34–45 (pp. 34–36).

[104] Gensen, 'Ein Frauengrab', pp. 42–43.

[105] Uenze, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber', pp. 86–88. No published illustration of the finds survives.

[106] Uenze, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber', pp. 91–92. Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit*, p. 67, concurs with Mildenberger.

Fig. 4. Kirchberg excavation plan.

Two parallel rows of west-east inhumations partially excavated in 1930 at Mardorf, 12 kilometres south-east of Fritzlar, appear to have belonged to a small *Reihengräber* cemetery, which Gensen dates roughly to the end of the seventh century.[107] Especially noteworthy are the burials at Kirchberg, a village 6 kilometres north of Fritzlar, where nine graves were discovered underneath the medieval church in 1980 (Fig. 4). Six of these graves underlay the foundations of the oldest stone-built church on the site, which is of uncertain date but certainly early medieval. All but one of the burials were west-east oriented, and two of the west-east inhumations, a man and woman of advanced years, lay together within a large 2.2-by-3.6-metre burial chamber.[108] A pair of post-holes within the chamber indicate that it once had a superstructure which must have predated

---

[107] Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit*, p. 66. The 1930 excavations at Mardorf appear to have remained unpublished.

[108] K. Sippel, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der Pfarrkirche, auf dem Kirchhof und dem benachbarten Gutshof von Kircherg (St Niedenstein, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) in den Jahren 1979, 1980 und 1984', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 85–191; H. Göldner and K. Sippel, 'Spätmerowingische Gräber unter der Kirche von Niedenstein-Kirchberg, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *Archäologische Korrespondenzblatt*, 11 (1981), 65–77.

the construction of the stone church on the site. The assemblage of the adult burial in grave 9, illustrated in part in Figure 5, included a pair of stirrups, belt fittings, shears, a bone comb, knife, a fourth-century Roman coin, a golden finger ring, and gold pendants. Grave 12 contained the remains of a five-year-old child, along with a knife, bone comb, and brooch. The adult burial in grave 8 included stirrups, a knife, pendant, and belt buckle. Of the remaining burials on the site, all of which were of adults, graves 16 and 180 contained pottery and large numbers of beads, while graves 1 and 224 contained pieces of metalwork. Göldner and Sippel give the date of the burials as 'late Merovingian or early Carolingian', that is, late seventh to early eighth century.[109]

These few burials appear to illustrate a fundamental shift in Hessia's political landscape during the seventh century, but we would do well to consider the implications of using such a limited set of data to hypothesize a major political or social change. To begin with, the presence of typical Rhineland mortuary behaviour does support the theory that the precise form of the burials was the result of contact between central Hessia and that region, although we cannot be sure that the meanings and intentions of the behaviour were identical in both areas. It is now commonly acknowledged among anglophone early medievalists that *Reihengräber* burials have little to do with expressing broad political loyalties or ethnic identities, but were highly ritualized and partially idealized projections of social identity by a particular group towards a predefined audience, for particular purposes, within a unique cultural context.[110] Studies by Effros, James, Halsall, and Brather and Wotzka of Continental material, and by Härke of early Anglo-Saxon weapon burials,[111] have taught the lesson that we should heed specific local

---

[109] Göldner and Sippel, 'Spätmerowingische Gräber', p. 75.

[110] Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*, p. 118.

[111] Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology*, p. 118; James, 'Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul'; James, 'Merovingian Cemetery Studies and Some Implications for Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries, 1979*, ed. by P. Rahtz, T. Dickinson, and L. Watts, BAR British Series, 82 (Oxford: Hedges, 1980), pp. 36–41; Halsall, 'Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier'. See also Halsall, 'The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilization*: Forty Years On', in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, ed. by J. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 196–206; J. Werner, 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilization: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Archaeologia Geographica*, 1 (1950), 23–32; H.-W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen Elbe und Loire*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 19, 2 vols (Munich: Beck, 1974), I, 195–207; Brather and Wotzka, 'Alemannen und Franken?', especially p. 205; H. Härke, '"Warrior graves?" The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite', *Past and Present*, 126 (1990), 22–43.
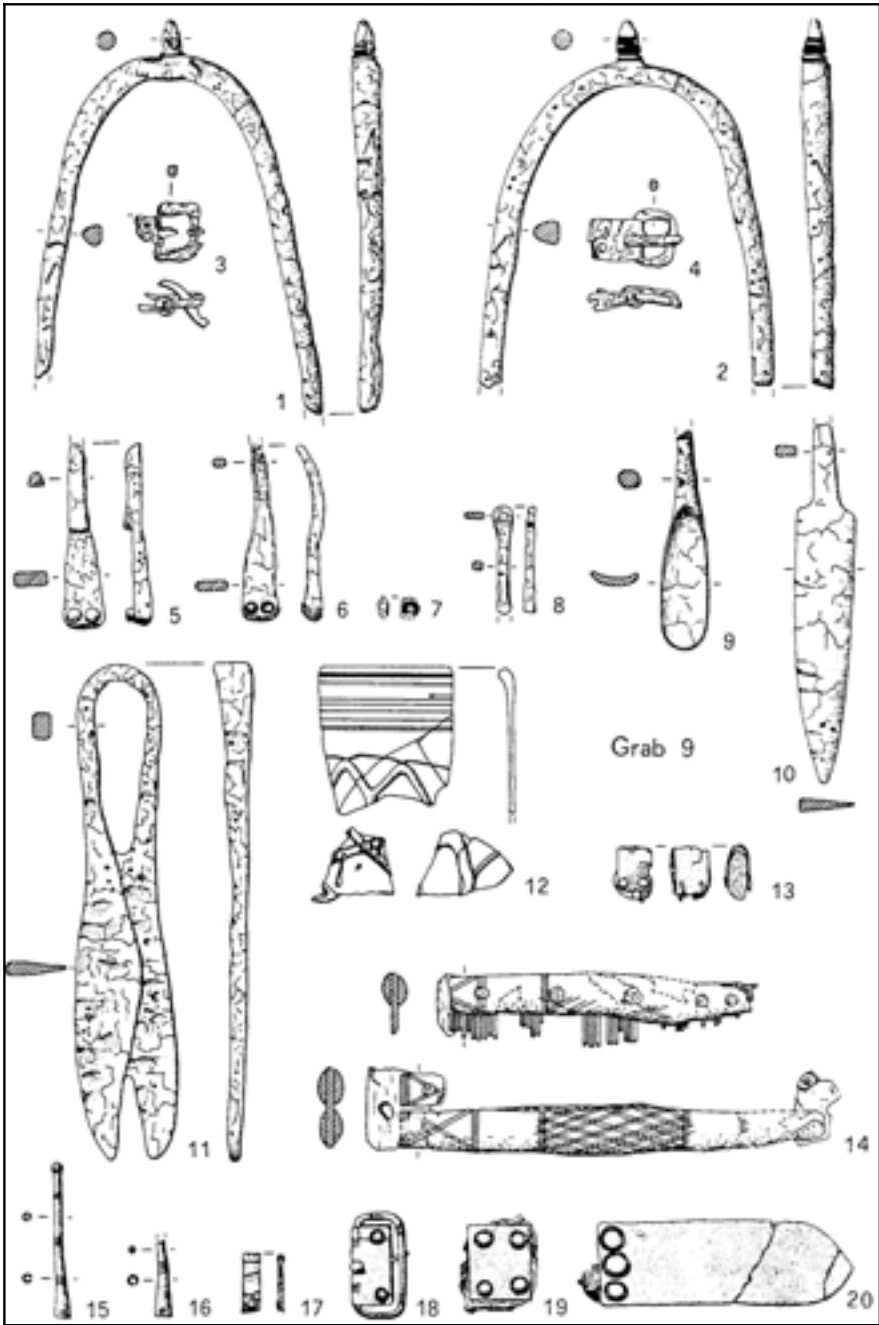
Fig. 5. Kirchberg grave goods.

circumstances before interpreting burials according to an overly generalized model of mortuary behaviour.[112]

Three characteristics of the graves that appeared in Hessia from the mid-seventh century are especially notable: their relative wealth in comparison to typical row-graves of the central Rhineland, which they closely resemble; their rarity; and their locations. First, the Fritzlar burial would be notable in almost any cemetery of the Frankish south for the volume and variety of its furnishings, while its large timbered chamber would make it highly conspicuous. The Werkel and Kirchberg burials, though not comparable to that of Fritzlar in terms of ostentation, would also rank among the more generously furnished burials of a typical Rhineland cemetery. The individuals responsible for these burials must have had access to considerable material resources, sufficient for us to refer to them as members of the local elite.

Second, the rarity of furnished burial in Hessia exaggerates this relative wealth. At Werkel the recovered burial appears to have been part of a cemetery of unknown size, while there may also be further graves within the vicinity of the medieval church at Kirchberg. Even if these burials were not as isolated as their limited excavations make them seem, the lack of further discoveries in the area of the lower Eder and Fulda suggests that their apparent scarcity when compared to the areas of the Rhine-Main and lower Lahn is a fair representation of the regional material record. That the Fritzlar burial, one of the few seventh-century burials so far discovered in Hessia, was of such a conspicuous nature cannot be ascribed to mere chance. The community practising its mortuary customs at Fritzlar was small but clearly capable of performing ostentatious funerary rituals resembling those of the Frankish south.

Finally, the location of the Frankish-style burials in the lower Eder basin is highly significant. A glance at Map 4 will remind the reader that the crossing at Fritzlar was a hub of regional communications, while Map 6 illustrates its central place in the settled landscape of Hessia since at least the Roman period. The cemeteries at Werkel and Kirchberg both lie on important communication routes with the north, the cemetery at Mardorf on the main road between Fritzlar and Hersfeld. Fritzlar, of course, became the site of Boniface's first monastic

---

[112] See R. Samson's acerbic critique of attempts by Christlein, Steuer, and others to determine the relative social levels of large numbers of temporally and spatially diverse *Reihengräber* burials according to a universal classification of wealth expended in mortuary ritual: R. Samson, 'Social Structures from *Reihengräber*: Mirror or Mirage?', *Scottish Archaeological Review*, 4 (1987), 116–26.

foundation. These burials are thus crucial evidence for relatively early Frankish influence at sites which had been, and would remain, of regional importance.

Whether the individuals given furnished burials in central Hessia were themselves from the Rhineland is of course impossible to ascertain. Gensen suggests that the woman buried at Fritzlar was a Frank who had married a member of the local nobility, and wonders whether it was her descendents who granted Boniface the land for his monastery at Fritzlar some two generations later.[113] This is an enticing supposition, but we can only be sure that the people who buried her were familiar with, and chose to use, customs of furnished inhumation which were common in the Frankish south and largely unknown in the Hessian north. In the south these customs were part of a complex social performance intended for an audience who recognized the meanings and messages of the customs, and were in a position to use them themselves. In a northern context, the meanings and symbolism of such a burial are necessarily transformed, for the southern audience is in part removed and replaced by one which is not familiar with the customs of furnished inhumation, and which — as the archaeological record testifies — did not seek to adopt them on a large scale.

Those men and women performing the funeral ceremonies must have recognized that in doing so they were marking themselves out as 'foreign' to a great part of the audience. Indeed, this may have been part of their purpose. We cannot know precisely how local people perceived and interpreted the various aspects of the burials, but it is likely that a major theme was the 'southernness' of the rituals — the recognition that these were Frankish customs, and that, by practising them, those performing the burial were expressing an elite identity which was inherently Frankish. These deaths had thus provided a small group of people with an opportunity to make a highly visible political statement. From the middle of the seventh century, the Franks maintained a direct and conspicuous presence in the central Hessia, introduced Rhineland customs and perhaps forged alliances by marrying into the local aristocracy. The burials at Kirchberg and Mardorf provide evidence that entire communities near Fritzlar were following Frankish burial customs by the end of the century, and this was related to an even more dramatic change in the political landscape in the 690s.

---

[113] Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit*, pp. 69–70; Sippel, 'Hessen', pp. 499–500, also suspects that the grave contained a Frankish woman who had married into the local elite.

## Phase 3: Direct Frankish Control of Hessia, 690–721

While the exact circumstances leading up to the military domination of the north by the Franks are not clear, the strategic motivation appears to have been the aggressive expansion of the Saxons, who had been steadily absorbing neighbouring groups into their loose, politically diffuse confederacy for some time. The tail end of this process appears in the historical record with Bede's report that the Saxons had conquered the *Boructuari* around 692.[114] If they can be equated with the Bructeri of Tacitus[115] and the Borthari of Pope Gregory III,[116] the Boructuari lived to the north-west of Hessia along the river Lippe. By this time the Saxons had also reached northern Hessia. Excavations in the 1960s and 1990s on Gaulskopf, a promontory overlooking the middle Diemel valley (Fig. 6), revealed that it had been fortified in the second half of the seventh century, with an earth rampart topped by a wooden palisade enclosing an area of some 7 hectares.[117] A similar fortification was probably also in existence at Eresburg by this time (Fig. 7).[118] The apparent destruction and abandonment of the Frankish fortification of Eichloha at Fulda around 700 may have been the result of a Saxon incursion, as Vonderau and Hahn believed.[119] In 715, according to the *Annales sancti Amandi*, the Saxons pillaged the lands of the Charuari, thought to have

---

[114] *HE*, v. 11, pp. 484–87.

[115] Tacitus, *Germania*, chap. 33, p. 54, l. 1.

[116] Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, l. 12. On the identity of the *Borthari* in this letter, see Chapter 5, below, pp. 197–200.

[117] W. Best and H. Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der mittelalterlichen Wallburg Gaulskopf bei Warburg-Ossendorf, Kr. Höxter', *Germania*, 75 (1997), 159–92 (p. 182).

[118] Eresburg, modern Obermarsburg, is a large promontory in the upper Diemel valley where the Weinstraße crosses the river en route to Paderborn. Its continuous, dense occupation means that no extensive excavations have ever been undertaken and that any early fortifications are likely to have been destroyed by later development. It is first mentioned in 772, when Charlemagne besieged and captured it at the beginning of the Saxon Wars (*Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 32–35). Despite the lack of archaeological evidence or earlier references, it seems highly likely that such a strategic location had been fortified by the Saxons some time previously, perhaps in the seventh century along with Gaulskopf. Other nearby Saxon hillforts were at Iburg (25 km north of Gaulskopf), Brunsburg (34 km north-east of Gaulskopf), and Skidrioburg (46 km north of Gaulskopf). Best, 'Die Ausgrabungen', Abb. 1.

[119] H. Hahn, 'Kat. 211.1: Fulda Domplatz-Bereich', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 300–07 (p. 304). Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, p. 112, also entertains the possibility.

Fig. 6. Gaulskopf seen from the east (distant wooded rise on the left).
This Saxon fortress may have been the site of a Bonifatian church.



Fig. 7. Eresburg seen from the south. This was an important
Saxon fortress on the Diemel, which fell to Charlemagne in 772.

dwelled on the very edge of Frankish territory along the lower Lippe and Ruhr,[120] while Willibald reports that by 723 a large part of Thuringia had also fallen under Saxon control.[121]

In response to this growing threat, from the last decade of the seventh century the Franks began to mirror the Saxon fortifications with a number of their own, including Büraburg near Fritzlar, Kesterburg on the Weinstraße, and Weidelsburg, 18 kilometres north of Fritzlar.[122] No historical source alludes to this strategic development, but the archaeological evidence is vivid and overwhelming. The excavations at Kesterburg and Büraburg during the 1960s and 1970s each produced large, almost identical assemblages of Rhineland-style pottery that pointed towards the simultaneous Frankish occupation of both sites around 700 or slightly earlier.[123] Büraburg was the larger of the two sites, and probably the largest man-made construction seen in Hessia for at least seven hundred years (see Fig. 8). Wand estimates that some 23,000 tonnes of stone and mortar were required to construct its kilometre-long circuit of walls and trenches, enclosing 8 hectares of a spur that offered a commanding view over Fritzlar and the densely populated heart of Hessia (Fig. 9).[124] The entire encircling wall was rebuilt during the eighth century, following the same course but set back slightly from its original position.

In total, the 8 per cent of the settlement excavated within the walls revealed traces of sixty stone and timber buildings (not all contemporaneous), which suggests considerable density and scale of occupation.[125] The numerous spurs, harness fittings and weapon fragments recovered from within the walls are likely the traces of a mounted garrison.[126] Together with a 4-hectare settlement area revealed by field-walking the plateau outside the eastern defences, the permanent

---

[120] *Ann. S. Amand.*, p. 6; for discussion, see H. Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission südlich der Lippe', in *Westfalia Sacra: Quellen und Forschungen zur Kirchengeschichte Westfalens*, ed. by H. Börsting and A. Schöer, 7 vols (Münster: Aschendorf, 1948–81), II (1950), 133–86 (p. 140).

[121] '[U]t cetera que manebat residua populi turba Saxonum se subiecerat principatu': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 33, ll. 1–2.

[122] Best and Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen', p. 182.

[123] For an in-depth archaeological discussion of the sites of Kesterburg and Büraburg, see Schlesinger, 'Early Medieval Fortifications'.

[124] Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', pp. 184–89.

[125] Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', p. 197.

[126] Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', p. 200.
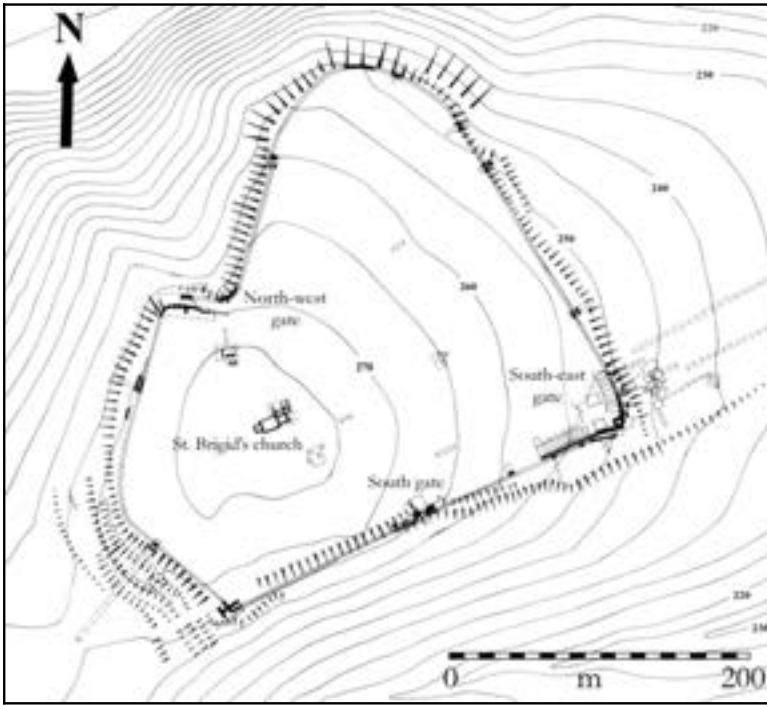
Fig. 8. Büraburg excavation plan.



Fig. 9. Büraburg seen from the location of the early medieval settlement of Geismar.
In the eighth century the upper slopes of the hill would have been stripped of trees.

population of Büraburg before its desertion *c.* 850 can be reckoned in the hundreds.[127] It was also intended to serve as a place of refuge for the surrounding population in times of danger, as it did during a Saxon attack in 774.[128] The only building to have survived within the settlement is a church dedicated to St Brigid which still stands on a plateau at the summit of the hill; recent investigations of the church have shown that the surviving seventeenth-century building is built directly upon its Merovingian predecessor, and incorporates some earlier fabric from as early as the seventh century.[129]

The Kesterburg fortress on the hill of Christenberg in many ways parallels the development of Büraburg (Fig. 10). It was established at the same time, that is, in the decade preceding 700, was fortified using the same construction techniques, and was also later abandoned except for its church, in this case dedicated to the Frankish patron St Martin, which still survives in its eleventh-century form.[130] The fortifications at Kesterburg were less extensive than those of Büraburg, enclosing an area of 4 hectares after they were expanded slightly in the early eighth century, but its location immediately west of the Weinstraße means that its strategic value must have been just as great. Gensen suspected that Kesterburg succeeded an earlier fortification on Hundsberg 5 kilometres to the south-east, which also revealed late seventh-century Rhineland pottery.[131]

The third site known to have been fortified by the Franks at this time is Weidelsburg, a basalt cone which rises abruptly 200 metres from the Naumburg basin, midway between the Eder and Diemel (Fig. 11). It is ideally situated to command the north-south communication routes from Eresburg and Gaulskopf to Fritzlar, as well as the east-west routes from Eresburg and Korbach to Kassel.

---

[127] Büraburg has a mid-ninth-century date of abandonment according to Wand's pottery series, which may, like Gensen's Kesterburg series, require careful revision in light of more recent ceramic research in northern Hesse (see below).

[128] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 13, p. 41, l. 28, to chap. 22, p. 42, l. 36.

[129] See below, pp. 177–84.

[130] Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken', p. 129, dated the latest pottery series from Kesterburg to the early ninth century, but Thiedmann's later analysis of the metal finds indicated that the fort remained occupied until the tenth or possibly early eleventh century (A. Thiedmann, 'Neue Forschungen zum Christenberg bei Münchhausen', *Hessen Archäologie*, 1 (2001), 126–28 (pp. 127–28)). A piece of wood recovered from a well within the fortress was subjected to dendrochronological (tree-ring) dating and demonstrated that the well was still in use in 753/54, the year of Boniface's death. Gensen, 'Ein Keramikkomplex mit dem Schlussdatum 753'.

[131] Gensen, *Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen*, pp. 46–47.
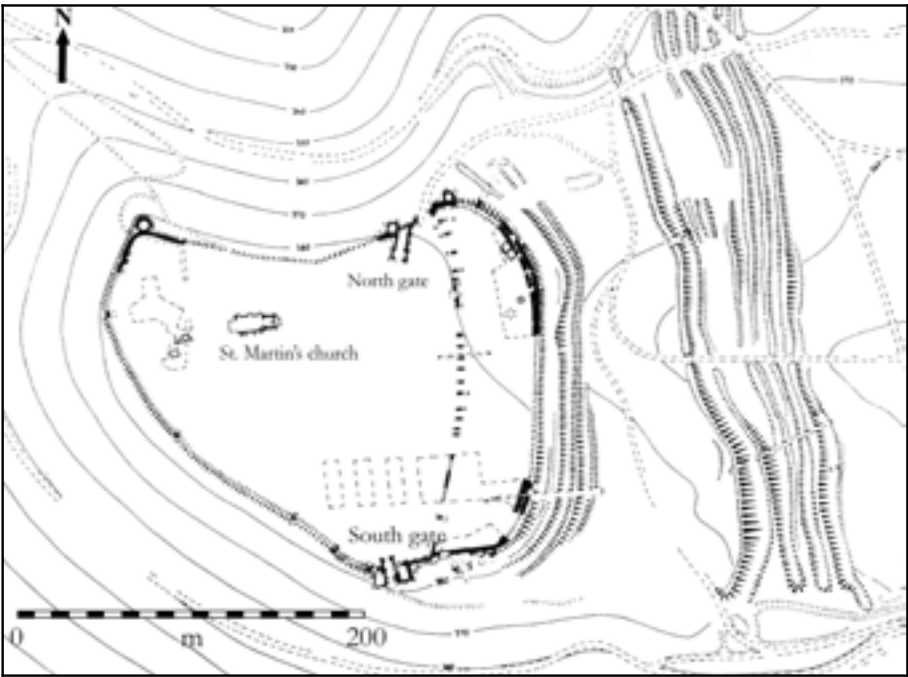
Fig. 10. Kesterburg excavation plan.



Fig. 11. Weidelsburg seen from the north. The surviving fortress dates from
the fourteenth century, but the original fortification was Frankish *c.* 700.

Nothing is known of the original Frankish fortification due to the later construction of a large thirteenth- and fourteenth-century castle on the hilltop.[132] Although, with an area of less than half a hectare, the hilltop would not have allowed a fortress on the same scale as Büraburg or Kesterburg, excavations in the 1930s revealed large quantities of Rhineland pottery from the second half of the seventh century and eighth century, leaving little doubt that it was occupied by the Franks at this time.[133]

There may have been other contemporary Frankish fortifications in Hessia which have yet to reveal secure archaeological evidence. It is all but certain that Amöneburg was fortified by the end of the seventh century, given its political importance at the start of Boniface's mission,[134] although no clear archaeological evidence has survived from this period due to its continued occupation and development up to modern times. Pottery finds from Schauenburg, a 100-metre-high basalt cone on the road between Weidelsburg and Kassel, possibly include wheel-turned wares of the seventh or early eighth century, which would be suggestive of a minor Frankish fort similar to that at Weidelsburg.[135] Heinemeyer has not ruled out the existence of a Frankish fortification *c.* 700 at the river crossing of Kassel,[136] and it seems probable that Frankenberg, overlooking the point where the Weinstraße crossed the Eder, was also fortified.

Irene Kappel has proposed that Dörnberg, 11 kilometres west of Kassel, was occupied at the same time as Büraburg,[137] although the evidence for this is ambiguous (Figs 12 and 13). Dörnberg has yet to be excavated, and while ceramic evidence recovered from field-walking demonstrates that it was certainly occupied in the prehistoric period as well as in the eleventh century, Sippel disputes that

[132] R. Knappe, *Mittelalterliche Burgen in Hessen* (Gudensberg-Gleichen: Wartberg, 2000), pp. 35–36.

[133] Sippel, 'Hessen', p. 501; Sippel, 'Die dunklen Jahrhunderte in der Geschichte Baunatals: Zur Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit in Nordhessen aufgrund archäologische Funde', in *Chronik der Stadt Baunatal*, I: *Lebensraum, Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Baunatal (Baunatal: Magistrat der Stadt Baunatal, 1994), pp. 205–26 (pp. 216–17).

[134] See below, pp. 168–76.

[135] I. Kappel, 'Die Schauenburg (Schaumburg) bei Hoof ', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 216–19.

[136] Heinemeyer, 'Die Anfänge der Stadt Kassel', p. 17.

[137] I. Kappel, 'Dörnberg bei Zierenberg', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 199–202; J. Kneipp, *Versunkene Kulturen zwischen Bauna und Diemel* (Kassel: Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1996), p. 73.

Fig. 12. Dörnberg seen from the Helfensteine. Originally occupied in the pre-historic period, this may also have been a Frankish stronghold in the eighth century.
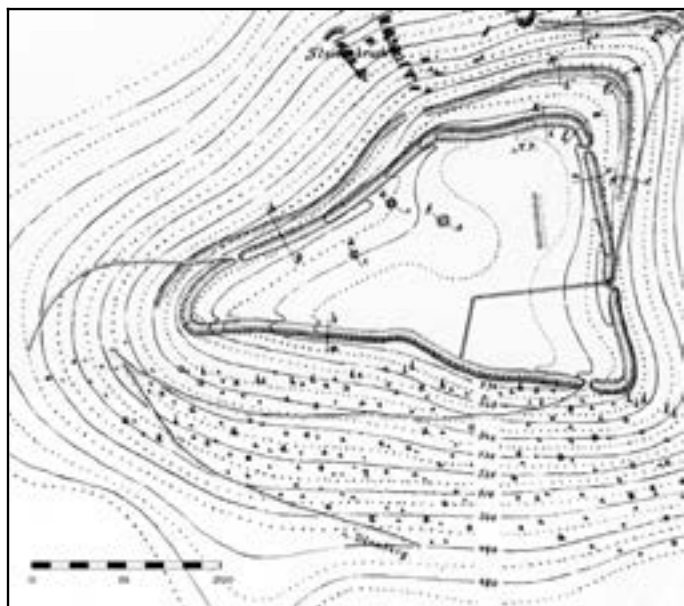


Fig. 13. Dörnberg excavation plan.

any of the pottery can be reliably dated to the seventh or eighth century.[138] A defensive bank and ditch encircles the natural plateau of the hill, enclosing an area of about 6 hectares, with further ditches on the northern slope, but, again, without excavation none of these can been securely dated. The form and scale of the fortifications are similar to those at Büraburg and Kesterburg, while Dörnberg would have been a strategically useful site for the Franks, being much larger than Weidelsburg and standing directly between the likely Bonifatian minster of Schützeberg and the densely forested border district of the lower Fulda and Diemel. Until Dörnberg is excavated, however, its status in the eighth century must remain uncertain.

Saxon expansion into Thuringia must have also placed pressure upon eastern Hessia, although there is nothing like the archaeological evidence of the north to illustrate how the Franks countered it. The threat may have been lessened somewhat by the densely wooded hill country between the Fulda and Werra, which formed a natural strategic buffer against invasion; in addition, the security of Hessia's eastern border would have been best achieved through the consolidation of Frankish rule in Thuringia itself. There was an eighth-century fortification overlooking the main road between Fulda and Erfurt at Grasburg,[139] and Knappe also regards Boyneburg, a prominent hill on the road between Fritzlar and Erfurt, as a probable early medieval fortification.[140] The site of a castle from at least the eleventh century, it would have been well situated to guard the crossing of the Werra at Eschwege, the main route to Erfurt, and the estates at Ulfen and Renda, 6 kilometres distant, which Boniface may have held before his death.[141]

The strategic coherence of the Frankish fortifications is clear on Map 4. Amöneburg and Kesterburg stood at the border of Hessia and the Lahn valley,

---

[138] K. Sippel, 'Archäologische Fundstellen und Funde aus mittelalterlicher Zeit im Stadtgebiet von Zierenberg', in *Zierenberg, 1293–1993: Ausgewählte Aspekte aus 700jähriger Geschichte*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg (Kassel: Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg, 1993), pp. 42–56 (p. 49). In her article in the same volume, Kappel qualifies her previous assertion, stating that 'all conjectures about Dörnberg will rest upon very incomplete evidence until excavations take place' ('Archäologische Fundstellen und Funde aus vorgeschichtlicher Zeit im Stadtgebiet von Zierenberg', pp. 36–41 (p. 38)).

[139] Sippel, 'Die Grasburg bei Mansbach'; J. Vonderau, *Denkmäler aus vor- und frühgeschichtliche Zeit im Fuldaer Lande*, Veröffentlichungen des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins, 21 (Fulda: Fuldaer Geschichtsverein, 1931), p. 66.

[140] Knappe, *Mittelalterliche Burgen*, p. 61.

[141] These properties appear in the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*: *UBH*, no. 38, p. 72. For a full discussion, see Chapter 7, below, pp. 356–70.

Frankenberg and Büraburg protected the two main crossing points of the Eder, Weidelsburg and perhaps Schauenburg and Dörnberg protected the region between the Eder and Diemel, while Kassel, Boyneburg, Grasburg, and Fulda formed a defensive chain towards the east. The system was of course imperfect, composed of isolated strong points and staging posts rather than a continuously guarded frontier. We know, for example, that hostile Saxons penetrated between the Fulda and Werra and established themselves near Hersfeld in the 730s,[142] and the *Vita Wigberti* provides a vivid description of the 774 Saxon invasion of central Hessia during which Fritzlar was burned and the local population forced to flee within Büraburg's ramparts.[143] As well as serving as places of refuge, such fortifications were bases from which counterattacks could be organized during an invasion, especially against enemy bands returning home weary and laden with booty.[144] A Saxon army which raided unusually far into the Rhineland in 778 and camped on the return journey at Laisa, 6 kilometres west of the Weinstraße at Kesterburg, was destroyed by a force which had probably been waiting in the fortress for their return.[145]

The Frankish annals do not begin to record Frankish offensive campaigns into Saxony until the time of Charles Martel, who led expeditions north in 719,[146] 720,[147] possibly 722,[148] 724,[149] and 728 or 729,[150] but it is hard to imagine that

---

[142] Fulda tradition in the 790s, as recorded by Eigil in his *Vita Sturmi*, recalled that hostile Saxons had lived close to Sturm's original hermitage at Hersfeld, founded in 736. See Chapter 7, below, pp. 320–29.

[143] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 13, p. 41, l. 28, to chap. 22, p. 42, l. 26.

[144] G. Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 148.

[145] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 197–200, Gensen, *Althessens Frühzeit*, p. 46.

[146] According to *Ann. Petav.*, p. 7, corrected by Böhmer from 718. J. F. Böhmer and E. Mühlbacher, *Regesta Imperii*, I: *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, 751–918* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1908), p. 13.

[147] *Ann. Petav.*, p. 7, and repeated in several other annals; see Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta Imperii*, p. 13.

[148] *Ann. Laures.*, p. 24, recorded *bella contra aquiloniam* in 722, although whether this refers to Frisians or Saxons (or both) is unclear. See Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta Imperii*, p. 14.

[149] *Fred. Cont.*, p. 175, ll. 1–3.

[150] *Ann. Petav.*, p. 9, has the entry *Karolus voluit pergere in Saxonia* under 729. The same annals also claim that Charles Martel campaigned in Saxony in 728, but Böhmer argues that this is a mistaken reference to a campaign in Bavaria during that year. Böhmer and Mühlbacher,

Büraburg, Kesterburg, and Weidelsburg had lain unused for the twenty or more years before this. Until Charlemagne's wars of conquest, it appears that the normal course of warfare between Franks and Saxons involved relatively brief, fierce campaigns intended to secure hostages, extract tribute, or establish military dominance year by year.[151] Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard, writing in the early ninth century,[152] gives this description of the Saxon borderlands before 772:

> There were also circumstances that led to daily disturbances of the peace. Except in a few places where large forests or stretches of mountains intervened and made the limits of each side's territory clear, their borders and ours met almost completely in open plains, in which there was no end to the murder, pillage, and arson committed by both sides.[153]

Since Einhard was writing from a position of temporal distance and personal prejudice, we should not take this vision of daily carnage as authoritative or universal, and we should be especially wary of projecting it back to the time of Charles Martel. There may have been extended periods of peace on the borderlands, and the annalists tended not to record the relatively peaceful, if uncordial, negotiations that might have taken place between Franks and Saxons. Fortifications such as Büraburg and Kesterburg, indeed, could have been as effective at maintaining peace as they were necessary for the pursuit of war.

Yet these were not, on the whole, peaceful times. The Franks found it all but impossible to persuade or force their Saxon neighbours into lasting peace deals, and one reason for this appears to have been the lack of recognized kings or common leaders with whom they could negotiate. The ethnic identity of the Saxons was at once broad and amorphous, encompassing a large number of subgroups which are not easily described by historians used to Latinate definitions of

---

*Regesta Imperii*, p. 16. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, p. 117, accepts an actual campaign in 728 and a planned campaign in 729.

[151] McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 103–04; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 117–18; J. Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', in *The Continental Saxons*, ed. by Green and Siegmund, pp. 299–314 (p. 300).

[152] On the date of composition of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, see McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 11–14, who prefers a date of 'most likely before 817 but certainly no later than 823'.

[153] 'Suberant et causae, quae cotidie pacem conturbare poterant, termini videlicet nostri et illorum poene ubique in plano contigui, praeter pauca loca, in quibus vel silvae maiores vel montium iuga interiecta utrorumque agros certo limite disterminant, in quibus caedes et rapinae et incendia vicissim fieri non cessabant': Einhard, *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS Rer. Germ., 25 (1911), p. 9, ll. 19–25.

kings, dukes, and provinces.[154] Bede also found this situation peculiar and worth explaining; probably deriving his information from contacts involved in Willibrord's Frisian mission, he stated that the Saxons elected a common leader only in times of war, but otherwise were ruled by a number of *satraps*, or tribal chieftains.[155] Saxon fortresses such as Gaulskopf, however, aside from the use of wood instead of stone in the circuit walls, are scarcely inferior to the Frankish fortifications on the other side of Hessia, and prove that Saxon leaders were able to command considerable manpower and material resources, whether individually or within a confederacy. It is above all apparent that it took many decades for the Franks to gather the will or resources to conquer Saxony permanently, and until this time the Hessians would be trapped within a seething cauldron of violence that could on occasion boil over into open warfare across their borders.

## Hessia, c. 721

### The Economic and Political Landscape

This, then, was the Hessia that Boniface entered in 721. Charles Martel, by this time the effective ruler of eastern Francia, had campaigned against the Saxons for the two previous years, possibly using the Hessian fortresses as staging posts. Yet beyond the immediate military implications, there had been large Frankish garrisons at Büraburg, Kesterburg, and Weidelsburg for a generation. The arrival of Franks in large numbers *c*. 690 transformed the structures of economy and settlement, for these troops required food, fuel, and equipment, and their horses required fodder; with them came administrative and clerical staff, families, traders, and craftsmen eager to exploit a new market. The archaeological record provides ample evidence for these changes at Geismar, on the opposite shore of the Eder to the Büraburg. The village shifted north after the early medieval period (Walter Schlesinger suggests following its destruction by Saxons during the attack

---

[154] For further discussion, see M. Becher, 'Die Sachsen im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert: Verfassung und Ethnogenese', in *799 Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn*, ed. by C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz: von Zabern), I, 188–94; I. Wood, 'Beyond Satraps and Ostriches: Political and Social Structures of the Saxons in the Early Carolingian Period', in *The Continental Saxons*, ed. by Green and Siegmann, pp. 271–86; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 116–18.

[155] *HE*, V. 10, pp. 480–83.

of 774),[156] leaving its original core preserved beneath pastureland and accessible to thorough excavation between 1973 and 1980.[157] Field-walking revealed a total settlement area of approximately 450 by 200 metres, only the eastern part of which was excavated. Geismar was already an important Roman-period site, as we have seen, but the late seventh century, as well as witnessing the sudden appearance of Rhineland-style wheel-turned wares,[158] also saw a new phase of settlement which shows clear evidence of central planning, with houses arranged in east-west rows adjoining a north-south central street.[159]

Geismar appears to have been only one local settlement that saw considerable expansion and restructuring at the start of the eighth century. Another is Holzheim, 2 kilometres south-east of Büraburg, where excavation revealed the sunken floors and postholes of over fifty buildings dating from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, after which time the site appears to have been abandoned.[160] The earliest buildings, which ceramic evidence suggests date from the late seventh century,[161] seemed to follow a general north-south orientation. This suggests that, like Geismar, Holzheim was laid out according to a fresh plan *c*. 700, replacing an earlier, smaller settlement.[162] The name *Holzheim* (first attested in 1040 as

---

[156] Schlesinger, 'Early Medieval Fortifications in Hesse', p. 244.

[157] Despite the lack of full publication, Geismar is one of the most important Roman-period and early medieval settlement sites to have been excavated in Germany. Best's 1990 publication *Funde der Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit* was based on his 1984 doctoral dissertation at Cologne, and deals principally with the small finds of the early medieval settlement. Robert Heiner, *Studien an Siedlungskeramik*, was concerned with the pre-Roman and Roman-period ceramics, while Thiedmann's *Die Siedlung von Geismar bei Fritzlar* is an illustrated booklet which gives an overview of the site. A further summary of the excavation (with site location plan, although no plan of the excavated area itself) is R. Gensen, 'Kat. 158: Frühmittelalterliche Siedlung bei Geismar', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 240–41; see also idem, 'Die frühgeschichtliche Siedlung von Fritzlar-Geismar', in *Der Schwalm-Eder Kreis*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 114–24.

[158] Best, *Funde der Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit*, p. 99 and Abb. 43. See pp. 123–27 for Best's harsh criticism of Wand's methodology in recording and publishing the ceramic evidence from his Büraburg excavations; despite some methodological differences, however, their pottery chronologies for Geismar and Büraburg both agreed with that of Gensen for Kesterburg.

[159] Thiedmann, *Die Siedlung von Geismar bei Fritzlar*, pp. 18–19.

[160] Schotten, Wand, and Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen', pp. 215–16.

[161] Of the total pottery assemblage from Holzheim, 1.8 per cent was Merovingian in date (sixth and seventh centuries), 11.7 per cent Carolingian (eighth and ninth centuries), suggesting a major increase in the size of the settlement from *c*. 700 (Schotten, Wand, and Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen', p. 242).

[162] Schotten, Wand, and Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen', pp. 255–56.

*Holcheim*, from OHG *holz*, 'wood'), according to Schotten, may relate to the settlement's original economic relationship with Büraburg.[163]

Although Geismar and Holzheim are the only early medieval settlements to have been excavated to this extent,[164] pottery finds tell a similar story in other parts of Hessia.[165] In short, wherever the Franks went from the beginning of the eighth century, there followed an explosion of Rhineland ceramic use in the wider landscape. Field-walking has shown this to be true around Kesterburg and Amöneburg,[166] in the Fritzlar district[167] and in the Naumburg basin around Weidelsburg,[168] and wheel-turned wares have appeared as far north as Kassel.[169] This period of early Carolingian settlement expansion is also reflected in the toponymic landscape, marked by the appearance of place-names including the element *-hausen*, which tend to cluster outside the most anciently settled districts and represent new foundations dating from the early eighth century onwards.[170] Pottery and place-names alone do not allow us to determine the extent to which this phase of settlement expansion was coordinated by central authorities, for example by local lords who desired to develop their agricultural resources,[171] or by

---

[163] Schotten, Wand, and Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen', p. 218. See also *Holzheim bei Fritzlar*, ed. by Wand; Wand, 'Siedlungsarchäologische Untersuchungen im mittelalterlichen Dorf Holzheim bei Fritzlar', *Zeitschift geschichtlicher Politik und ihre Didaktik*, 14 (1986), 31–51.

[164] A small rescue excavation also took place at the deserted medieval village of Lamperts-hausen, 6 km west of Amöneburg, in 1979. See M. L. Leidorf, 'Eine Notgrabung in der frühmittel-alterlichen Wüstung Lampertshausen bei Ebsdorfergrund-Wittelsberg, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf', *FH*, 29/30 (1989/90), 331–42.

[165] The most recent studies of north Hessian medieval pottery assemblages are R. Haarberg, 'Die mittelalterliche Keramik in Niederhessen', *HJL*, 23 (1973), 1–61, and H.-G. Stephan, 'Mittelalterliche Töpferei in Niederhessen', *FH*, 32/33 (1992/93), 207–79.

[166] Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken', pp. 122–25.

[167] M. Born, 'Grundzüge der Siedlungsentwicklung im Kreis Fritzlar-Homberg', *Hessische Heimat*, 7 (1957/58), 14–19; Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', especially pp. 203–05.

[168] Sippel, 'Hessen', p. 501.

[169] W. Niemeyer, 'Ein Bemerkenswerter merowingischer Fund aus Niedervellmar bei Kassel', *ZHG*, 68 (1957), 209–12.

[170] See Gensen, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken', pp. 122–25; Born, 'Grundzüge der Siedlungsentwicklung'; Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', pp. 203–05; Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', p. 51.

[171] Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', especially pp. 204–05.

opportunistic pioneers who took axe and hoe and set about clearing patches of unused woodland for cultivation and pasture. The reality was probably a combination of the two, the balance shifting over time.

The frustrating lack of pre-Fulda charters or other historical sources for Hessia also makes it extremely difficult to draw anything more than generalizations regarding the political landscape of the region in the years immediately before Boniface's mission. Schlesinger makes these remarks on the nature of Frankish authority east of the Rhine (specifically Thuringia):

> In my opinion, the dependence of the *gentes* east of the Rhine upon the Merovingian Empire was essentially based on the fact that the elite of the tribal group acknowledged this dependence, was supported by the Merovingian king, and could be disposed of and replaced in the event of conflict. Yet this was less a question of political constitution than of raw power.[172]

Raw power certainly lay at the heart of Frankish rule in Hessia. Since we have no record of major campaigns before 700, it seems possible that most of the region passed quietly into the hands of Frankish rulers and was held without major rebellion. Schlesinger argues that this process of Frankish expansion left the native power structures largely in place, if not intact; local leaders, not having any strong sense of inter-regional unity, readily accepted the protection and support of the greater power. To support this argument, Schlesinger points out that most of the nobles establishing new settlements in the Grabfeld region in the late eighth century charters of Fulda had family roots in the area — in other words, there had been no large-scale supplanting of the indigenous elite.[173]

The general impression of a largely non-military expansion of Frankish overlordship should not, however, blind us to the kind of local political tensions and conflicts that often arise in historical situations where smaller polities are caught on the fringes of an expanding superpower. The Frankish chroniclers, as already mentioned, grant us no insight into the nature of Frankish control in Hessia during the early eighth century. Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, however, permits a valuable glimpse into political arrangements at Amöneburg upon Boniface's arrival in 721 (Fig. 14).

---

[172] 'Ich bin der Meinung, daß die Abhängigkeit der ostrheinischen *gentes* vom Merowingerreich im wesentlich darauf beruhte, daß die Spitze des gentilen Verbandes diese Abhängigkeit anerkannte, vom merowingischen Königtum autorisiert wurde und im Konflictfalle beseitigt und ersetzt werden konnte, was aber weniger eine Verfassungs- als eine Machtfrage war': Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', p. 34.

[173] Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', p. 51. Kunter, 'Baggerfund aus der Lahnaue', p. 124, makes a similar argument concerning the elites of the Lahn valley.

Fig. 14. Amöneburg seen from the south. This is the
site of Boniface's first missionary foundation in 721.

Willibald, writing between 754 and 768, did not mention the two brothers ruling
at Amöneburg in 721 as a historical curiosity. Rather, his primary motive in
mentioning Dettic and Deorulf was to emphasize Boniface's authority, granted
him by both Charles Martel and God, which enabled him to convert the brothers,
and then their people, from semi-paganism to the orthodox faith:

> [Boniface] then came, with the protection of God, to other parts of Germania in order to
> preach, and reached, with God's help, the above-named place [Amöneburg], where twin
> brothers, Dettic and Deorulf, were in charge. He recalled them from the sacrilegious use of
> idols, with which they were doing great harm under the name of Christianity; he also won
> back a large crowd of people from the wicked superstition of paganism by revealing the path
> of proper understanding and putting aside the horror of their mistakes; and, having brought
> together a congregation of God's servants, he built a chapel. In the same way, by preaching
> according to the evangelical command as far as the borders of the Saxons, he freed the erring
> Hessians, until then given to pagan rites, from the captivity of demons.[174]

---

[174] '[Bonifatius] tunc quippe, Domino patrocinante, alias Germaniae praedicandi causa partes
adiit et supradictum locum [Amanburch], cui gemini praeerant germani, Dettic videlicet et
Deorulf, Domino auxiliante, obtinuit, eosque a sacrilega idulorum censura, qua sub quodam chris-
tianitatis nomine male abusi sunt, euocavit ac plurimam populi turbam, rectae patefacta intelle-
gentiae viae, errorum deposito horrore, a malivola gentilitatis superstitione retraxit et monasterii,

Despite Willibald's motives and bias, and making allowances for the vagaries of memory and transmission between the events of 721 and the writing of the *Vita Bonifatii* roughly forty years later,[175] the above passage is invaluable in considering the political landscape on the southern fringes of Hessia a generation or so after the Kesterburg and Büraburg fortresses were first founded. From Willibald's account we can be certain that Amöneburg was a centre of political power in the 720s and that its rulers were subservient to Charles Martel. Boniface worked through the established Frankish elite from the very beginning of his mission, and among his surviving correspondence is a letter of support from Charles Martel, the original of which he may have presented to Dettic and Deorulf on arrival at Amöneburg in 721.[176]

Willibald does not give us the titles of the two brothers at Amöneburg (e.g., *duces* or *comites*), but simply says that they were 'in charge' (*praeerant*), which leaves much uncertainty as to their relationship with the Frankish ruler. If they were indeed twin brothers, however, it could suggest that their position of shared power was a hereditary one; and if so, their inherited rule would have had one of three possible origins: it could have been a Frankish foundation, as was the duchy of Würzburg *c.* 630;[177] it could have had purely local origins, the product of a political landscape that evolved independently of Frankish involvement but which the Franks did not seek to remove; or, between the two, there could have been a line of local rulers whom the Franks supplanted with their own elite, as Dagobert I had replaced the Thuringian kings with (supposedly) more dependable Frankish *duces*.[178] Friedhelm Debus argues that the Latinized names *Dettic* and *Deorulf* share the stem *Theuda-* and are of west Frankish origin,[179] although naturally a west Frankish name does not make one west Frankish.

collecta servorum Dei congregatione, cellam construxit. Similiter et iuxta fines Saxonum Hessorum populum paganicis adhuc ritibus oberrantem a demoniorum evangelica praedicando mandata captivitate liberavit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, pp. 26–27, ll. 17–24.

[175] Ian Wood has commented that Willibald's 'carefully researched work' is in fact rather less biased in certain matters than we could expect it to be, given the context of its creation (*Missionary Life*, p. 64).

[176] Tangl, ep. 22, pp. 36–38. Tangl plausibly dates this letter to 723, relating it to the letter of late 722 by which Gregory II recommended Boniface to Charles Martel. Even so, Boniface probably met and won the protection of Charles Martel before he came to Amöneburg in 721, whether this support was expressed in the existing letter or an earlier one that was not preserved.

[177] Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', pp. 36–37.

[178] Schlesinger, 'Zur politischen Geschichte', p. 49.

[179] Debus, 'Zur Gliederung', p. 35.
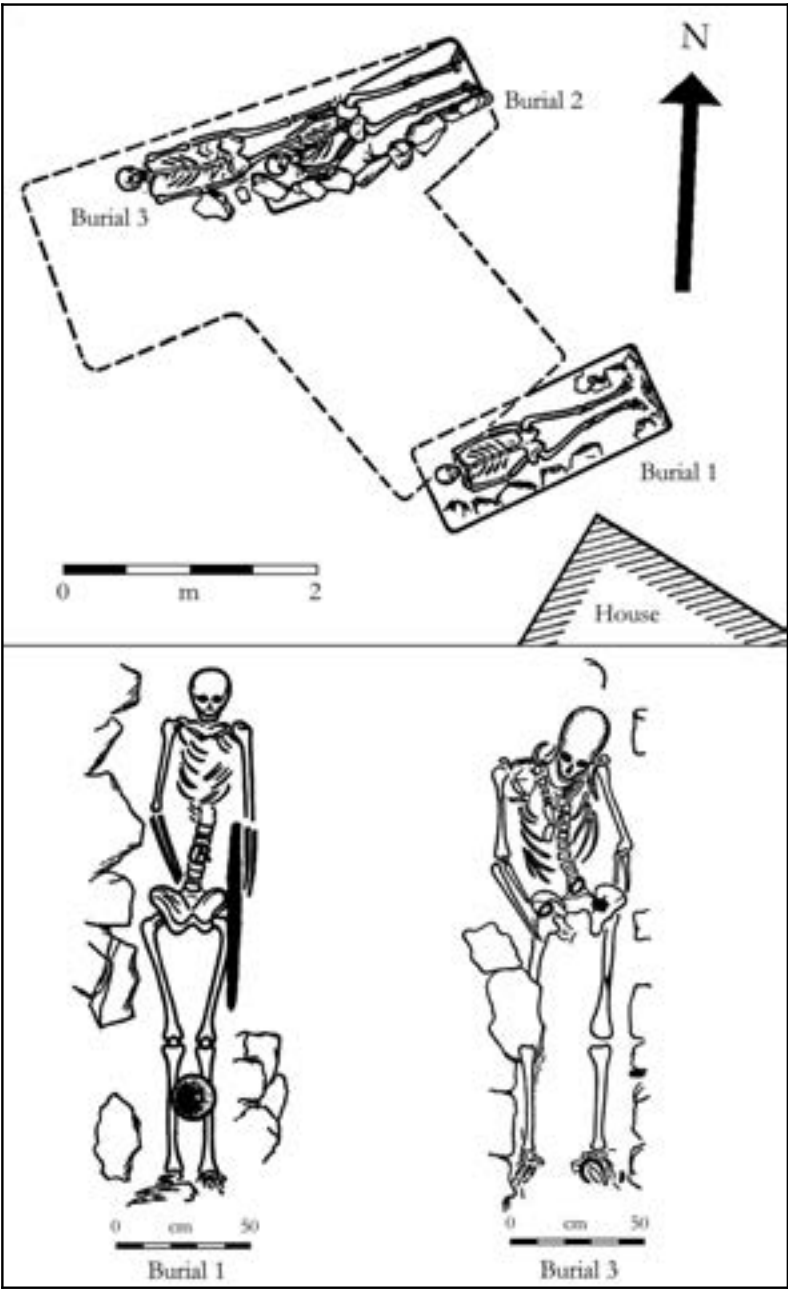
Fig. 15. Amöneburg excavation plan.

Whatever the relationship of Dettic and Deorulf to their overlords in the middle Rhine, Amöneburg provides a stark illustration of the potential violence to which members of the local elite could be subjected at this time. In 1957 three stone-lined inhumations were discovered during building work within the circuit of Amöneburg's medieval town wall (see Fig. 15). Each burial was supine and west-east oriented, with burial 3 partially overlying burial 2. The good condition of the skeletons allowed for their detailed analysis by Manfred Kunter.[180] Burial 1 contained the skeleton of a fifty- to sixty-year-old man who bore multiple unhealed cuts to his jaw, face, and head, seemingly the result of a clumsy attempt to sever his head while he was lying prone. He had serious unhealed wounds to the left arm that were consistent with a gesture of self-defence against an armed aggressor, while his right arm and left leg were also badly damaged. In the opinion of Kunter, 'the victim, incapable of combat and very likely unarmed, was brutally slaughtered and multilated'.[181] The grave contained a long saxe placed at the left hip, an iron buckle at the midriff, and a shield boss rested on the lower legs. Uenze compared the form of the bronze shield boss to an example from Württemberg, which is securely dated by a coin to the second half of the seventh century,[182] while Mildenberger suggested that the long saxe should bring the date of burial towards the end of the seventh century,[183] and Sippel dates the same saxe to 700–50 and the buckles of grave 3 to 710–50.[184]

Burial 2 included no goods, but the skeleton of the seventy-year-old man showed similar signs of violent death. It had an old, healed cut on the inner-left forearm, and there were several unhealed wounds on the right arm which, while probably not fatal themselves, must have been followed shortly by the man's death.[185] Burial 3 contained the skeleton of a man aged 50–55 who had suffered a serious wound to the neck and jaw, and had had part of his left arm severed. The similarity of these wounds to those of the other two skeletons, along with the fact that they were buried in close proximity, led Kunter to suggest that all three men

---

[180] M. Kunter, 'Menschliche Überreste aus frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunden in Nordhessen (6.–9. Jh)', in *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 235–77 (pp. 256–57).

[181] 'Das kampfunfähige, wohl unbewaffnete Opfer wurde [...] brutal niedergemetzelt und verstümmelt': *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 256–57.

[182] Uenze, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber', pp. 85–86.

[183] Uenze, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber', pp. 90–91.

[184] Sippel, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde*, pp. 15–16.

[185] Kunter, 'Menschliche Überreste', p. 257.

had died in the same encounter.[186] The grave furnishings of burial 3 included two iron buckles at the waist, a spur on the left foot, and two other fragments of iron — one rectangular piece lying on the left hip, and another smaller piece lying 15 centimetres to the side of the lower left leg.[187]

It is worth observing that, if these men were killed in or after 721, Boniface very possibly knew them personally, or would at least have been aware of the circumstances of their deaths. These circumstances, including whether they died together as Kunter suggested,[188] and whether they died at Amöneburg or elsewhere, are not discernible to us given the available evidence. It is apparent, however, that their killer or killers dispatched them with extraordinary and merciless ferocity, even making a clumsy attempt to behead the middle-aged man from burial 1 as he lay dead or dying on the ground. It is also significant that their badly mutilated bodies could be recovered and brought to Amöneburg to be accorded privileged, Frankish-style burials. The one clear lesson we can learn from these burials is that Boniface was entering a context where social and political tensions could potentially result in extreme violence directed at high-ranking individuals.

We cannot be certain how closely the political arrangements in central Hessia resembled those of the district of Amöneburg. Willibald implies that the situation with regard to aberrant Christian/pagan customs among the wider population was similar, but he does not mention any counterparts of Dettic and Deorulf resident at Fritzlar or Büraburg. There must have been local potentates associated with these sites who were subservient to Charles Martel; that Willibald did not mention them may indicate that they were generally supportive of Boniface and practised a sufficiently orthodox form of Christianity to avoid correction by him. This could in turn imply that central Hessia was effectively controlled by members of the Frankish elite originally from the Rhineland, who either worked alongside or had authority over the local leaders. It certainly seems unlikely that Charles Martel would have entrusted command of the large Büraburg garrison to a local leader in preference to one of his own Frankish supporters. Upon his arrival in central Hessia in 721, Boniface may therefore have been faced with two broad sources of political authority: a Frankish military commander based at Büraburg, whose support he won through the patronage of Charles Martel, and the partially Frankized, partially Christianized elite of Hessia whose focus of power had been at Maden for generations.

---

[186] Kunter, 'Menschliche Überreste', p. 257.

[187] Uenze, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber', Abb. 2 and 3.

[188] Kunter, 'Menschliche Überreste', p. 257.

## The Religious Landscape

Boniface was clearly not the first missionary in Germania, but the degree to which some form of Christianity had spread among the population before Boniface's arrival is difficult to determine.[189] While Christianity had certainly made less of an impact in Hessia than in regions to the south and east, the surviving sources relating to Boniface's mission, in particular the hagiography written over the century following his death, amplify Boniface's role and diminish or ignore the part played by the Frankish church.[190] Willibald does not deny that there was a pre-existing church structure, if a somewhat neglected one, in Thuringia by the time Boniface began his missionary work there, although he may have overly dramatized the resident duke's hostility to Christianity.[191] Bede also records that the Anglo-Saxon bishop Swithberht had led a detachment of monks from the Frisian mission into the territory of the Boructuari, to the north-west of Hessia, but that the mission collapsed following the annexation of the region by the Saxons *c.* 695.[192] Two other Anglo-Saxon missionaries, Hewald the White and Hewald the Black, were martyred around the same time when their visit to a Saxon village went awry.[193] Boniface, perhaps learning from these disasters, did not attempt to evangelize the Saxons until he had spent seventeen years working in Hessia.[194]

---

[189] M. Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen', in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. by H. Löwe, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), I, 239–318 (p. 239).

[190] Wood, 'An Absence of Saints?', pp. 340–45.

[191] Willibrord had been active in Thuringia before Boniface, as evidence by two charters, dating from 707 and 714, in which the Thuringian *dux* Heden granted possessions to Willibrord: *Chronica aevi Suevici*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 23 (1874), pp. 55–56, 60. See Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 64. A letter of Pope Gregory II from 722 was addressed to a group of Thuringian leaders whom he praised for retaining their Christian faith in the face of adversity (Tangl, ep. 19, p. 33), while Willibald portrays Boniface's early attempts to reconstruct the Thuringian church and expel four fornicating Anglo-Saxon priests, remaining notably silent concerning Willibrord (*Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 32, l. 3, to p. 33, l. 12). Walter Schlesinger suggests that these priests were the remnants of Willibrord's missionary party ('Das Frühmittelalter', in *Geschichte Thüringens I: Grundlagen und frühes Mittelalter*, ed. by H. Patze and W. Schlesinger, Mitteldeutsche Forschungen, 48. 1 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1968), pp. 317–80 (p. 344)). See also Wood, 'An Absence of Saints?', p. 342.

[192] *HE*, V. 11, pp. 484–87.

[193] *HE*, V. 10, pp. 299–301.

[194] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 197–200.

The lower and middle Lahn valley had been well integrated into the archbishopric of Trier by the early eighth century,[195] and Bishop Rigibert of Mainz was extending his jurisdiction along the Main and into the Wetterau around the same time.[196] Christianity appears to have spread as far as the upper Lahn perhaps through emulation and adoption among local elites as much as through episcopal direction. In a letter of 724, Pope Gregory II referred to an unnamed Frankish bishop who was claiming part of Boniface's mission field as his own.[197] Although Hauck, Tangl, Schieffer, Wallace-Hadrill, Fletcher, and other historians have assumed the bishop in question to have been Gerold of Mainz,[198] it seems more likely, as Classen argued in 1929, that Boniface's activities in the Amöneburg district were clashing with the ambitions of Milo of Trier in the upper Lahn valley.[199]

Classen also observed a high concentration of medieval church dedications to St Martin along the upper Lahn. Early dedications to this saint are ubiquitous in the Frankish territories, and in this case they give some idea of the farthest advance of Frankish Christianity towards Hessia by the early eighth century.[200] The dedications include the church (later diaconate) of Kesterburg, which almost certainly became one of Boniface's central mission churches. The fact that it lies at the very fringe of dedications to St Martin suggests that the Franks had not yet undertaken any dedicated missionary activity beyond the Lahn before 721, when Boniface arrived to find a conspicuously syncretic form of Christianity being practised by the rulers of Amöneburg.[201]

If Christianity had only recently been adopted, and not well understood, by the elite of Amöneburg in 721, it is unlikely to have been much more thoroughly established in Hessia.[202] Of all the parts of central Germania where Boniface was

---

[195] Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit'; Kunter, 'Baggerfund aus der Lahnaue', p. 124; Classen, *Die kirchlichen Organisation*, pp. 3–5.

[196] Classen, *Die kirchlichen Organisation*, pp. 3–5; Heinemeyer, 'Die Missionierung Hessens', p. 48.

[197] Pope Gregory II refers to the claim in a letter to Boniface of 724: Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 25–31.

[198] K. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 4 vols (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1914–25), I, 471; Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, n. 2; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 149; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 151–52; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 208.

[199] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, pp. 3–4.

[200] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, pp. 40–43.

[201] Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen', pp. 242–45. *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, pp. 26–27, ll. 17–24.

[202] F. Schwind, 'Fritzlar zur Zeit des Bonifatius und seiner Schüler', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 69–88 (p. 70); Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen', p. 277.

Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the monastery at Büraburg. The monastic complex is based on the excavations of Wand; the surrounding buildings are mostly conjectural.

active, Hessia and the Saxon borderlands were the places where he encountered forms of paganism least influenced by Christianity.[203] The only two likely pre-Bonifatian churches in central Hessia are St Brigid's at Büraburg and St Martin's at Bergheim. The date of St Brigid's foundation has been discussed ever since Vonderau, who excavated the site between 1926 and 1931, took the dedication to the Irish St Brigid as evidence of a foundation by Hiberno-Scottish monks.[204] While this fit well with Vonderau's belief that the fort itself was occupied by the Franks as early as the sixth century, Wand's moving of the date of Frankish occupation to *c.* 690 also led him to assume a later date for the foundation of the church, which he argued was established in order to serve the occupants of the fortress.[205]

Wand's excavations of the area around the church in 1969 and 1996 also led to the discovery of the original monastic complex (Fig. 16). The oldest structure on the site, judging from the stratigraphic relationships, was a stone-lined cistern,

[203] Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 141.

[204] J. Vonderau, *Die Ausgrabungen am Büraberg bei Fritzlar 1926/31*, Veröffentlichungen des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins, 22 (Fulda: Fulda Aktiendruckeri, 1934); on the dedication see also Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 188.

[205] Wand, 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken', pp. 198–99.

Fig. 17. St Brigid's chancel arch. During restoration work, fragments of wood were recovered from within the arch and were shown to date from the seventh century.

1 metre in diameter and 2 metres deep. One of the lining stones was inscribed with a Benedictine cross, an unequivocal indication of sacred usage, although it need not have been carved when the cistern was first built. Abbutting onto the cistern was a rectangular stone building, 3 by 2 metres in size, with a sunken floor or cellar. The western wall of this building was in turn incorporated into the eastern wall of the church, which explains the church's unusual 25 degree divergence from a true west-east orientation. This arrangement left the cistern positioned precisely on the nave-chancel axis; Wand interprets it as a baptismal font, large enough to contain a fully grown adult, and the cellared building next to it as a changing room or ceremonial antechamber. A door in the north wall of the chancel led to a series of rooms of uncertain function, while immediately north of the nave was a cloister with a covered walkway, on the eastern side of which were arranged four cells. The complex as a whole could have comfortably housed no more than one abbot and six monks.[206]

Thus there was certainly a small, pre-Bonifatian monastic community at Büraburg, but Werner sees no reason to assume that the dedication to St Brigid, first attested in 1289, is original, nor to entertain the possibility of Hiberno-Scottish origins.[207] Recent opinion has shifted back to Vonderau's theory of a Hiberno-Scottish origin. Best, as noted above, has argued that the pottery evidence from Büraburg points towards some level of occupation at the site throughout the seventh century, but the most direct evidence for an early origin has come from the church fabric itself, which was intensively investigated during renovations from 2002 to 2008. While this research made clear that much of the church was rebuilt from the tenth century onwards, two pieces of wood recovered from within the mortar of the chancel arch provided radiocarbon dates of 543–668 and 558–667. Katharina Thiersch thus dates the construction of the main body of the chancel arch, the oldest surviving part of the church above ground, to the late sixth or early seventh century (Fig. 17).[208] This creates an obvious conflict

---

[206] N. Wand, 'St Brigida auf dem Büraberg bei Fritzlar-Ungedanken (Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) — ein vorbonifatianisches Kloster der frühen Karolingerzeit', *ZHG*, 104 (1999), 11–36 (pp. 17–30) (repr. in *Archäologisches Zellwerk: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte in Europa und Asien; Festschrift für Helmut Roth*, ed. by E. Pohl, U. Recker, and C. Theune (Rahden: Leiford, 2001), pp. 509–29).

[207] See Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen', pp. 249–74.

[208] K. Thiersch, 'Bauuntersuchung der Kapelle St Brigida auf dem Büraberg bei Fritzlar', *Denkmalpflege und Kulturgeschichte*, 2 (2003), 22–26; K. Thiersch, 'Die Brigidenkapelle aus archäologische Sicht', in *Die Kapelle St Brigida in Fritzlar-Ungedanken: Eine der ältesten Kirchen nördlich des Limes*, ed. by K. Thiersch and P. Trosser (Fritzlar: self-published by the Catholic parish of Fritzlar, 2008), pp. 12–23 (p. 25). See also A. Thiedmann, 'Brigida auf dem Büraberg

with Wand's dating of the large-scale occupation of the site to the end of the seventh century.

An early seventh-century foundation at Büraburg by Hiberno-Scottish missionaries is not impossible, for St Columbanus was active in Burgundy, Alamannia, and Italy between 590 and 615 and also visited Mainz at least once.[209] Whether the Frankish presence in Hessia around this time was sufficient to justify and protect such a foundation is another matter: as we have seen, only from the middle of the seventh century do we have direct archaeological evidence for significant numbers of Franks in the Fritzlar district. Werner also notes that the earliest definite evidence for the veneration of St Brigid on the Continent dates only from the eighth century.[210] An alternative context is provided by St Kilian, who, according to the late eighth-century *Passio Kiliani*, preached at Würzburg during the 680s and was martyred by Duke Gozbert of Thuringia around 689.[211] It is conceivable that Kilian or one of his followers established a church of St Brigid at Büraburg around this date, which would coincide with the establishment of the Frankish fortress, but this sits poorly with the radiocarbon dates recovered from the chancel arch. We are left with two possibilities: either the church was founded much earlier than Kilian's mission and before Büraburg was occupied on a large scale, or else the wood was already 30 to 140 years old, perhaps taken from an earlier building, by the time it was included within the mortar of the chancel arch.

Given the historical context, the second possibility appears more likely. The privileged position of the church at the summit of the hill suggests that it dates from the very earliest period of fortification, and the large-scale occupation of Büraburg in the last few years of the seventh century is close enough in time and space to the Hiberno-Scottish activity at Würzburg to allow a plausible connection between the two. The reuse of fragments of wood from a dilapidated nearby building, meanwhile, would hardly have been an exceptional occurrence. We

---

bei Fritzlar-Ungedanken — neue Einblicke in die Baugeschichte', *Hessen Archäologie*, 5 (2005), 99–102 (p. 101).

[209] Jonas of Bobbio, *Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius libri II*, in *Ionae vita sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS. rer. Germ., 37 (1905), pp. 144–294 (I. 27, p. 212, l. 2).

[210] Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen', p. 257.

[211] Anon., *Passio Kiliani martyris Wirziburgensis*, ed. by W. Levison, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici III*, ed. by B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH rer. Merov., 5 (1910), pp. 711–28. For the date and context of the *Passio*, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 160–61.

might also remind ourselves of the later promotion of Kilian's cult at Würzburg by Boniface,[212] who selected both this city and Büraburg as two of his first episcopal foundations in 741.[213] He acknowledged and built upon Hiberno-Scottish foundations at Würzburg, and he may have done the same at Büraburg.

The possible connection to Kilian and, more important, the early existence of a stone-lined cistern which seems to have been intended for full-immersion adult baptism both suggest that Büraburg was indeed the site of missionary work before Boniface's arrival. On the other hand, the near dearth of other pre-Bonifatian foundations beyond Büraburg and the survival until 723 of a major pagan shrine near Geismar, less than 2 kilometres distant, implies that the earliest Christian clerics of Büraburg, whether Frankish or Hiberno-Scottish, had little interest, or at least little success, in evangelising the local area. It may be that their efforts were limited to converting the local Hessian elite, and that they lacked the resources or the desire to journey very far afield.

The dedication of another church (later mother church) to St Martin at Bergheim, 9 kilometres north-west of Büraburg, may also indicate an early Frankish foundation. Classen was inclined to regard the dedication as post-Bonifatian,[214] but it overlooks the crossing point of the Eder on the main route between Büraburg and Kesterburg, and its strategic importance must have been recognized as soon as the fortresses were established. This, along with the place-name suffix *-heim*, typical of the Frankish Rhineland but uncommon in Hessia, makes an early foundation by Frankish authorities very plausible. A pre-Bonifatian Frankish origin would also explain why, of all the early Hessian mother churches whose medieval dedications are known, Bergheim alone was not dedicated to St Peter. The mother churches dedicated to St Peter were at Fritzlar, Gensungen, Mardorf-Berge, and Schützeberg; as we shall see in Chapter 7, all of these churches were most likely established by Boniface, and their common dedication to his chosen patron is one element of a single coherent scheme of minster foundations.[215] The conspicuous dedication of the mother church of Bergheim to the most prominent Frankish saint may indicate that it, like the church of St Martin at Kesterburg, was already in existence when Boniface incorporated it into his scheme.

[212] Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 161.

[213] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 226–29.

[214] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 41.

[215] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 331–41.

Although there is no evidence for a coordinated Frankish mission in Hessia, this is not to say that three decades of direct Frankish involvement among the local elite had not had an impact on the religious habits of the Hessian population. Some features of Christianity appear to have been assimilated into local paganism in a form quite incompatible with Boniface's notion of Christian orthodoxy, such as the pagan adoption of a form of 'baptism' referred to in a letter of 732.[216] Such syncretism would probably have occurred in a fairly organic, undirected fashion via the close economic and political contacts of the Frankish garrisons at Kesterburg, Büraburg, and Weidelsburg with the surrounding populations. Nevertheless, the majority of Hessians had not been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, and so, by Boniface's understanding, were not Christian.[217] Given that this was the situation in central Hessia, where the Frankish influence was strongest, the extent to which a form of Christianity recognizable to Boniface was practised on the Saxon borderlands at this time is likely to have been minimal. Hessia was, in short, a region of pagans with perhaps small numbers of baptized Christians in the areas of strongest Frankish influence, and there was almost certainly no widespread church structure established in the region prior to Boniface's arrival.

## Conclusion

In the early eighth century, Hessia already had a long and complex political history. The district around Fritzlar had been the densely settled heartland of the Roman-period Chatti, who re-emerge from historical obscurity as the Hessians in the eighth century. By this time Hessia had been in the political orbit of the Frankish Rhineland for more than a hundred years, a largely ignored frontier province whose inhabitants retained strong cultural and religious affinities with the pagan Saxon tribes of the north. During the course of the seventh century, the gravitational well of the Rhineland deepened, sending ripples through the power structures of the Lahn valley. Whether through marriage alliances or the installation of a new elite, the Franks pulled central Hessia more deeply into their realm, a process which culminated in the 690s with the construction of several large military outposts intended to forestall Saxon expansion south.

---

[216] The letter is a reply from Pope Gregory III to the queries of Boniface: 'Eosdemque, quos a paganis baptizatos esse asseruisti, si ita habetur, ut denuo baptizes in nomine trinitatis, mandamus' (Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 22–23).

[217] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 376–80.

Fig. 18. Fritzlar seen from the west, with a view of the present-day cathedral of St Peter (left). The cathedral likely stands on the site of Boniface's original foundation.

This coincided with a period of steady population growth, as new settlements were founded and previously unused land was brought under the plough. An increasing number of high-status families in central Hessia, though seemingly not in the remoter valleys, adopted Frankish customs, straining older traditions and sharpening existing social tensions. Many of them may have walked the steep road up to Büraburg and undergone baptism in the cistern, which can still be seen next to the church of St Brigid.

This chapter has allowed us to glimpse Hessia through the eyes of the newly arrived Boniface. When he stood on the tower of St Brigid's church and looked across the Fritzlar basin, his view would have been rather different from that of the modern observer (Fig. 18). Much of the low ground along the Eder and its tributaries was open fields and scrubland, across which were scattered small, huddled villages and isolated farmsteads, each settlement marked by rising wisps of smoke. Around the cultivated land and pasture crowded the forests, more ubiquitous than today, and as sources of building material, food, fuel, and pannage much more a part of daily life. The trees grew thicker as they crept away from colonized areas, climbing up the slopes and smothering the peaks of the surrounding high country in a bristling blanket of oak and beech. If the landscape

is tame today, in the eighth century it still bore the brooding wildness of a half-muzzled beast. These deeper parts of the forest were visited, rarely if at all, by those who derived from it their living, or who fled or were forced from the embrace of settled society;[218] it was the domain of wolves and bears, witches and brigands; an old Hessian folktale tells how the Saxons, the fiercest race of all, were born with their first king from a spring in the Harz forest, and how their women grew like branches out of trees.[219]

Gradually, however, colonists nibbled away the wilderness, a process which received a new impetus from Frankish expansion at the end of the seventh century. Winning land from primeval forest is no small task with tools of wood and iron, and many settlements at the edge of the forest must have been new, their buildings flimsy, their inhabitants poor, and their fields still uneven and choked with rocks and roots. Kunter estimates an infant mortality rate in the Kirchberg district of 40 to 50 per cent throughout the medieval period, while the overall standard of living for eighth-century Hessia was probably close to that of contemporary Wessex.[220]

As the economic horizons of Hessia expanded, so did the political. Locals of Boniface's generation would have been deeply aware that the Hessia of 721 was a very different place to the land of their birth. In the past it had been possible to profess one's loyalty to distant Frankish overlordship while keeping hold of the pagan faith that was central to social identity and cohesion. When Boniface arrived with a letter of support from Charles Martel himself, determined to build upon the foundations of the Hiberno-Scottish monks who had come before him, the rules of the game changed: to be loyal, one now had to be Christian — and not only Christian, but the right sort of Christian. This simple condition, fuelled by the tireless devotion of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries to their cause, was to bring about the most dramatic rupture in Hessian society since the razing of Mattium seven hundred years before.

---

[218] Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, p. 53.

[219] K. Lynker, *Deutsche Sagen und Sitten in hessischen Gauen*, 2nd edn (Kassel: Wigand, 1860), p. 2.

[220] M. Kunter, 'Sterbwahrsheinlichkeit und Lebenserwartung in der nordhessischen Gemeinde Kirchberg (St Niedenstein, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) vom Mittelalter bis heute', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 193–201 (p. 194, Abb. 3).

# Part III. Mission

But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul — the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry plate of the panting earth. Nwoye's callow mind was greatly puzzled.

—Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1986), p. 106

# The Chronology of the
# Bonifatian Mission in Hessia

There are already ample studies of Boniface's life and career in both English and German. As discussed in Chapter 2, however,[1] the very breadth of his activity has tended to determine the broad scope of those who have studied it. The purpose of this book is to add resolution to a central part of the picture, and this will require a very careful analysis of the sources relating to the mission in order to tease out the ambiguities, misapprehensions, and oversights that might otherwise occur. Rather than interrupt the later discussion of the mission with repeated digressions or clutter it with excessive footnotes, I have dedicated this chapter to the construction of a critical chronology of Boniface's mission which we can use as a framework for our examination of the mission itself in Chapters 6 and 7. One of my principal aims will be to demonstrate that Boniface had always pursued his mission in Hessia with the intention of expanding it northwards, and that he did not surrender this desire even when his first concerted attempt to evangelize the Saxons was thwarted.

---

[1] See Chapter 2, above, pp. 26–31. For the principal English-language accounts of Boniface's career, see Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 204–13; Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe'; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 70–93; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 262–74; Thomas Noble's introduction to Emerton, *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, pp. viii–xxvii; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 58–60; Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, especially pp. 14–59; Lapidge, 'Boniface'; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 30–37; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 143–61; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 418–28. The most accessible German literature is Padberg, *Bonifatius*, especially pp. 28–106; Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas*, pp. 80–88; Padberg, 'Bonifatius — das Leben des Missionars', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 39–62; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, especially pp. 120–85; Wagner, *Bonifatius-studien*, pp. 227–54.

I have arranged the major events and periods pertaining to the Hessian mission under four headings: Boniface's evangelization of Hessia between 721 and 738; the foundation of his church at Fritzlar in the early 720s; the later years of the mission from 738 to 754, including his attempted evangelization of Saxony; and the foundation of the bishopric of Büraburg in 741/42 and its abolition in 746. Of these four areas of interest, only the first is richly and relatively unambiguously attested in our sources. The other three will require some discussion in order to clarify points of dispute; with the church of Fritzlar and the bishopric of Büraburg the discussion is mainly over points of chronology, while the very nature of the Saxon mission of 738/39 has been fiercely disputed. I intend to resolve these issues as far as possible in order to establish the overall course and context of the Hessian mission.

## Boniface's Evangelization of Hessia, 721–38

### Missionary Priest, 716–22

For the chronology of Boniface's early career, in particular his initial work in Hessia, we are almost entirely dependent upon the *Vita Bonifatii* of Willibald, an Anglo-Saxon priest based in Mainz who wrote the work between 754 and 769 under the patronage of Bishops Lul of Mainz and Megingoz of Würzburg.[2] This source has the advantage of having been written well within living memory of many of the events it purports to describe (in the case of Boniface's arrival in Hessia, approximately forty years later), and demonstrates a concern for historical accuracy unusual among early medieval hagiographical texts.[3] Since we now have

---

[2] On Willibald's identity as a cleric in Mainz, possibly attached to the church of St Victor, see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 61; R. Schieffer, 'Willibald', in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. by B. Wachinger, 2nd rev. edn, 14 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2008), x (1999), cols 1154–56; Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 41–47; W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, III: *Karolingische Biographien, 750–920 n.Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 10 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1991), pp. 6–18; K. Hansel, 'Das Stift St Viktor von Mainz', *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, 54 (1959), 1–11. Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 9–23, has recently claimed that the author of the *Vita Bonifatii* is to be identified with Bishop Willibald of Eichstätt.

[3] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 62–64. See also W. Wattenbach, W. Levison, and H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*: *Vorzeit und Karolinger*, II: *Die Karolinger*

a fuller understanding of the recent political history of Hessia *c.* 721, we can approach Willibald's text with greater critical awareness. Although Willibald models Boniface's missionary activities in Hessia on those of the early evangelists with little regard for particular historical context, and despite his reticence concerning the previous activity of Willibrord in Thuringia or the direct Frankish support which his hero enjoyed, there is nothing in his account that contradicts or is contradicted by what we know of the historical situation from other sources. On the contrary, Willibald's hagiographical account, contemporary letters, and archaeological evidence all complement one another, offering different perspectives on aspects of Boniface's initial mission in Hessia.

Boniface arrived in Hessia five years after his original decision to become a missionary. According to Willibald, Boniface's first attempt to join Willibrord's mission in Frisia in 716 was thwarted when Radbod, the Frisian king, led an uprising against the Franks and forced the Anglo-Saxon missionaries to suspend their efforts.[4] Boniface returned to Wessex, where he remained for a winter before embarking on a journey to Rome. Pope Gregory II granted him the name Boniface (he had previously been known by his Anglo-Saxon name of Wynfreth)[5] and directed him to spread the Gospel among the pagans of Germania. Boniface next visited Bavaria, Thuringia, and the middle Rhine, where he heard of the death of Radbod and immediately rejoined Willibrord in Frisia.[6] Direct corroborating evidence for Willibald's account up to this point is restricted to the original declaration of support from Gregory to Boniface, dated 15 May 719, which was preserved among Boniface's papal correspondence,[7] and a letter of Bugga, written *c.* 720, in which she refers to Boniface's audience with the Pope and the death of Radbod.[8]

---

*vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1953), pp. 176–77.

[4] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 4, p. 15, l. 31, to p. 18, l. 3.

[5] Vernacular personal names were often prone to scribal corruption in Latin documents, but the presence of Boniface's Anglo-Saxon name in an acrostic poem of his own authorship suggests that he spelled it *Uynfreth*. See C. Weber, 'Die Namen des heiligen Bonifatius', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 30 (1954), 39–66 (pp. 43–49).

[6] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 5, p. 19, l. 12, to p. 23, l. 21.

[7] Tangl, ep. 12, pp. 17–18.

[8] Tangl, ep. 15, pp. 26–28.

After two years working with Willibrord in Frisia,[9] Boniface returned to the middle Rhine and reached Amöneburg in 721. We already considered his encounter with the brothers Dettic and Deorulf, the semi-pagan rulers of Amöneburg, in the previous chapter.[10] Willibald records that Boniface travelled next to Hessia, where 'by preaching the Gospel close to the borders of the Saxons he freed from the captivity of demons the Hessian people, who until that time were dedicated to pagan rites'.[11] The following year, after performing a large number of baptisms, Boniface wrote a letter to Gregory II which does not survive, although Willibald may well have had it to hand when he wrote his vita.[12] Boniface was immediately summoned to Rome to give a more detailed report and to receive the full weight of papal support, including consecration as missionary bishop.

Ample contemporary documentation survives which can act as supporting evidence for Willibald's description of Boniface's second visit to Rome, including

---

[9] There are hints in Willibald's account that Willibrord and Boniface parted under less than amicable circumstances: *Vita Bonifatii*, p. 24, l. 12, to p. 2, l. 9. Both Schieffer and Padberg suspect Willibald of attempting to smooth over a serious clash of personalities or missionary methods between the two saints. See Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 118–19; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 36; also F. Flaskamp, 'Wilbrord-Clemens und Wynfith-Bonifatius', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 157–72.

[10] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 168–76.

[11] '[I]uxta fines Saxonum Hessorum populum paganicis adhuc ritibus oberrantem a demoniorum evangelica praedicando mandata': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, ll. 4–7.

[12] '[I]doneum quippe nuntium ac fidelem suarum litterarum portitorem nomine Bynnan Rome direxit patrique uenerabili apostolici sedis pontifici universa, quae circa illum, Domino donante, facta sunt, muto quidem littero ministrante, per ordinem reuelauit et, ut magna siquidem hominum multitudo, diuino inlustrante spiritu, regenerationis perciperet sacramentum, manifestauit. Sed et de rebus, quae ad cottidianam ecclesiae Dei necessitatem populique prouentum pertinebant, plura ob consilium sedis apostolicae interogando conscripsit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, ll. 9–19 (he sent to Rome an experienced and trustworthy messenger, Bynnan by name, with a letter in which he made known to the Supreme Pontiff, Bishop of the Apostolic See, all the matters which by God's grace had been accomplished, and the number of people who, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, had received the sacrament of Baptism. In addition he asked for guidance on certain questions concerning the day-to-day needs of the church and the progress of the people, for he wished to have the advice of the Apostolic See; *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, trans. by Talbot, pp. 42–43). The clarity of Willibald's summary, in particular his naming of Bynnan as messenger, suggests that he had read the letter. The apparent structure of this lost letter resembles those of letters which do survive between Boniface and the various popes: see Tangl, ep. 24, 26, 50, 51, 64, 80, 87.

Boniface's oath as a missionary bishop;[13] a letter of support from Charles Martel;[14] and letters from Gregory II to all Frankish Christians,[15] to churchmen,[16] to five named Thuringian leaders,[17] and to Charles Martel.[18] After petitioning Charles Martel for his protection, Boniface returned to Hessia and continued the mission with renewed vigour.

## Missionary Bishop and Archbishop, 722–38

The initial enthusiasm of Boniface's Hessian converts for their new faith had apparently worn thin over the winter months. Perhaps disillusioned by a renewal of warfare across the borderlands,[19] many of the recently baptized had lapsed into former customs and now rejected the rite of confirmation. Boniface rallied his supporters, who must have included some powerful members of the local elite, and ceremonially desecrated and destroyed the major pagan shrine of *robor Iobis*, 'Jupiter's Oak', near Geismar. Using the wood from the tree he built an oratory dedicated to St Peter, the location of which Willibald does not give.[20] For this crucial episode we are almost entirely dependent upon Willibald's testimony,[21]

[13] Dated 30 November 722. Tangl, ep. 16, pp. 28–29.

[14] Undated; see Chapter 4, above, pp. 168–76. Tangl, ep. 22, pp. 36–38.

[15] Dated December 1, 722. Tangl, ep. 17, pp. 29–31.

[16] Dated December 1, 722. Tangl, ep. 18, pp. 31–33. In his translation, Emerton somewhat misleadingly inserts 'in Thuringia' into the *salutatio* of this letter, whereas the Latin was originally addressed simply to 'clero ordini et plebi consistenti dilectissimi filii' (ibid., p. 31, ll. 19–21; *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 21). There is no solid evidence that Pope Gregory wrote to the Thuringian church before December of 724, shortly before Boniface began his mission there. Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 32–36.

[17] Undated, though possibly contemporary. Tangl, ep. 19, p. 33. This letter could also easily date to December of 724, when the Pope renewed his support for Boniface's imminent mission to Thuringia.

[18] Also undated. Tangl, ep. 20, pp. 33–34.

[19] Charles Martel's *bella contra aquilonia*, recorded in the *Ann. Laures.*, p. 24, for the year 722, if it was directed against the Saxons, may have been launched from Hessia in retaliation for an unrecorded Saxon attack.

[20] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 30, l. 19, to p. 32, l. 2.

[21] The so-called Herford letter, purportedly written to Boniface by Gregory III and incorporated into the thirteenth-century *Vita Waltgeri*, makes a reference to the felling of the Oak of Jupiter. See below, pp. 217–25.

but his reliability up to this point makes him a credible, if not impartial, witness; furthermore, the location of Geismar within 2 kilometres of the major Frankish fortress of Büraburg clearly indicates that Boniface was acting well within the protective shadow of his Frankish supporters.

A year later, in 724, Boniface wrote another report to Pope Gregory II, a reply to which survives.[22] In this letter, dated to 4 December 724, Gregory congratulated Boniface on his progress, mentioning neither Geismar nor Hessia by name, and stated that he had written to the Thuringians, enjoining them to 'establish bishoprics and found churches'.[23] Boniface had presumably requested that the Pope write a letter to the Thuringian church preparatory to his mission there, which Willibald portrays as taking place after the destruction of the Geismar shrine. Willibald's account, however, becomes vague at this point, giving few clues as to how Boniface contributed, if at all, to restoring secular and ecclesiastical order in the troubled Thuringian province, and not detailing any further events in Hessia.[24] Willibald goes on to paint a picture of the early missionary work in Thuringia and Hessia with swift, broad strokes:

> By these means the report of his preaching reached far-off lands so that within a short space of time his fame resounded through the greater part of Europe. From Britain an exceedingly large number of holy men came to his aid, among them readers, writers and learned men trained in the other arts. Of these a considerable number put themselves under his rule and guidance, and by their help the population in many places was recalled from the errors and profane rites of the heathen gods. Working in widely scattered groups among the people of Hesse [i.e., Hessia] and Thuringia, they preached the word of God in the country districts and villages. The number of Hessians and Thuringians who received the sacraments of faith was enormous and many thousands of them were baptized.[25]

---

[22] Tangl, ep. 24, pp. 41–43.

[23] '[U]t construant episcopia et aeclesias condant': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, l. 34.

[24] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 32, l. 3, to p. 34, l. 2.

[25] *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, trans. by Talbot, p. 47; 'Sicque sanctae rumor praedicationis eius diffamatus est in tantumque inoleuit, ut per maximam iam Europae partem fama eius perstreperet. Et ex Britanniae partibus seruorum Dei plurima ad eum tam lectorum quam etiam scriptorum alariumque artium eruditorum uirorum congregationis conuenerat multitudo. Quorum quippe quam plurimi regulari se eius institutione subdiderunt populumque ab erratica gentilitatis profanatione plurimis in locis euocauere. Et alii quidem in prouincia Hessorum, alii etiam in Thyringea dispersi late per populum, pagos ac uicos uerbum Dei praedicabant. Cumque ingens utriusque populi multitudo fidei sacramenta, multis milibus hominum baptizatis, perciperet': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 34, ll. 3–17.

Two other surviving letters date from the earliest phase of Boniface's mission. The first is a letter from Daniel of Winchester advising Boniface on methods of conversion,[26] and the second is a reply of Gregory II, dated 22 November 726, to a report of Boniface.[27] Some of the queries addressed by Gregory in this letter, particularly those concerning corrupt clergy, probably relate to Thuringia rather than Hessia.

We must also remember that Charles Martel had launched campaigns into Saxony in 719 and 720, the two years prior to Boniface's arrival; possibly in 722 and certainly in 724, during the very beginning of the mission; and again in 728 or 729.[28] We have no way of knowing the full extent to which these campaigns, and the Saxon provocations or retaliations that may have been associated with them but were not recorded, affected the people of Hessia. It is clear, however, that some of Boniface's earliest evangelization and ministration was performed among a population who had been subjected to several years of continual warfare across the Frankish-Saxon borderlands and had suffered the inevitable social and cultural disruption that warfare brings.

The first few years of the Hessian and Thuringian mission, from 721 to 726, are the most closely documented in the surviving letters and Willibald's vita. The emphasis of Willibald's narrative quickly shifts towards Boniface's work as a reformer of the Frankish and Bavarian churches from *c.* 736 onwards, and there is a six-year lacuna in the correspondence from 726 until 732, in which year Gregory III promoted Boniface to archbishop.[29] Padberg suggests that Lul deliberately left letters from this period to one side when compiling his master's correspondence because they contained evidence of turbulent relationships between Boniface and the Frankish clergy and secular elite.[30] The surviving letters, however, are hardly short of evidence of this kind,[31] and, as already discussed, we know so little about the storage and preservation of Boniface's letters before their

---

[26] Tangl, ep. 23, pp. 38–41. The letter is undated, but must have been written before Boniface's promotion to archbishop in 732, most likely during the earliest phase of his evangelization.

[27] Tangl, ep. 26, pp. 44–47.

[28] These campaigns are recorded in the Frankish annals; for references and a discussion of the sources involved, see Chapter 4, above, pp. 157–68.

[29] Tangl, ep. 28, pp. 49–52.

[30] Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 42–43.

[31] See, for example, Boniface's long and plaintive letters to Daniel of Winchester (Tangl, ep. 63, pp. 128–32) and Cuthbert of Canterbury (Tangl, ep. 78, pp. 161–70).
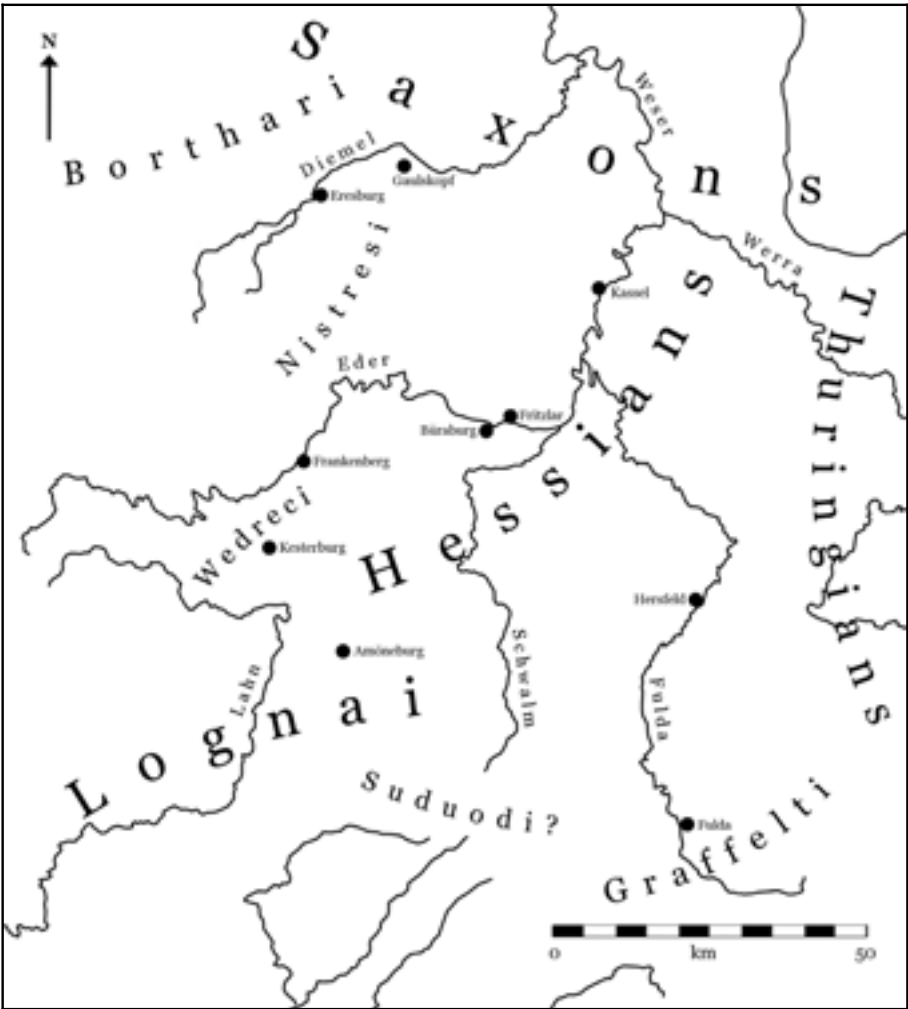
Map 10. The tribal landscape of the Hessian region *c.* 738.

collection at Mainz that we cannot rule out their accidental loss or destruction long before they reached Lul's hands.[32]

## The Extent of Boniface's Mission Field *c.* 738

The first directly contemporary source which allows us to delineate Boniface's sphere of activity in any detail is a letter of *c.* 738 from Gregory III, which was addressed 'to all the nobles and people of the provinces of Germania, the Hessians and Thuringians, the Borthari and Nistresi, the Wedrecii and Lognai, the Suduodi and Graffelti, and to all those dwelling in the eastern region [i.e., east of the Rhine]'.[33] The Pope wrote the letter during Boniface's 737/38 sojourn in Rome, and Boniface brought it back with him to the mission field. In the letter Gregory exhorted the named tribes to obey Boniface in matters of religion, to accept bishops and priests he might ordain over them, to reject those clerics whom he punished, and to abstain from all the pagan customs which they had rejected at baptism.[34] The letter appears to give a concise and invaluable list of the tribal groups among whom Boniface had been active from 721, and who were for the most part baptized and regularly ministered by 738. For this reason the identities and locations of the groups have been extensively discussed in the secondary literature, and general consensus has been reached concerning the locations of most of the tribes. We shall briefly consider the tribal names here, since they will give us an idea of the physical extent of Boniface's activities seventeen years into his mission. Since the letter represents the earliest occurrence of most of the tribal names, scholars have generally relied on the evidence of later charters to localize them.[35] The generally accepted locations of the tribes in the Hessian region are illustrated on Map 10.

The Hessians and Thuringians, first of all, are easily identified as the inhabitants of Hessia and Thuringia: Gregory's letter is, in fact, the earliest documentary appearance of the name *Hessi*. As Wand notes, it is unclear whether the following

---

[32] See Chapter 2, above, pp. 10–16.

[33] '[U]niversis optimatibus et populo provinciarum Germaniae, Thuringis et Hessis, Bortharis et Nistresis, Uuedreciis et Lognais, Suduodis et Graffeltis vel omnibus in orientali plaga constitutis': Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, ll. 10–14.

[34] Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, l. 15, to p. 69, l. 9.

[35] In most eighth- and ninth-century charters of Fulda, Lorsch, and Hersfeld a location is described as being *in pago N.*, 'in the *pagus* of N.', where N. is a collective name in the genitive plural. For further discussion see Backhaus, 'Die Gaue vor und nach 900', p. 41.

three pairs of tribal names represent subgroups of the Hessians and Thuringians, or would have considered themselves to have an entirely separate group identity.[36] A general consensus has long been reached that the Borthari are to be equated with the Boructuari of Bede[37] and with the Brukterer, a group who in early medieval charters inhabited the region of the upper Saale to the north-west of Hessia, beyond the river Diemel.[38] Similarly, the Nistresi are commonly identified with the Niftharsi, whose *pagus* stretched from the middle Eder to the Diemel along the north-western border of the Hessians.[39]

The Wedrecii were commonly placed in the Wetterau region north of Frankfurt until Demandt in 1953 proposed a more plausible identification with the district between the middle Lahn and the Eder, in which Kesterburg lies.[40]

---

[36] Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46.

[37] *HE*, v. 11, pp. 484–87.

[38] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 499 n. 3, placed the Borthari along the Wohra, a river that flows north from near Amöneburg, while H. Boehmer, 'Zur Geschichte des Bonifatius', *ZHG*, 50 (1917), 171–215 (p. 173), placed them on the upper Weser. Later opinion swung conclusively in favour of the Brukterer: Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68 n. 1; M. Tangl, *Bonifatiusfragen*, Abhandlungen der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2 (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1919), p. 5; E. E. Stengel, 'Politische Wellenbewegungen im hessisch-westfälischen Grenzgebiet', *Mitteilungen an die Mitglieder des Vereins für hessische Geschichte*, 25/26 (1927), 11–18 (p. 5); Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 179–80; Schmidt, 'Bonifatius und die Sachsen', pp. 242–43; Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', p. 138; Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46; W. Niemeyer, 'Zur Klärung hessischer Stammesfragen des frühen Mittelalters: Bemerkung zum Bonifatiusbrief 43', *ZHG*, 63 (1952), 13–26 (pp. 18–19). Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 134–35, proceeding from the flawed assumption that Boniface could not have evangelized the Brukterer because there is no evidence that he evangelized beyond the Diemel, makes an unconvincing attempt to identify the Borthari with the Osthari, an eastern Thuringian tribe who are not historically attested until the eleventh century.

[39] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 499 n. 3, placed the Nistresi on the river Nister, 80 km west of Amöneburg. Those who prefer an identification with the Niftharsi include Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 180; Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46; Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', pp. 162–63; K. D. Schmidt, 'Bonifatius und die Sachsen', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 227–46 (p. 239). Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 131–33, emends *Nistresi* to *uistresi* and identifies the tribe with the *pagus uuistregaugio*, which in the early ninth century lay 50 km east of Fulda, but there appears to be no good reason to accept his thesis in preference to the widely accepted identification with the Niftharsi.

[40] Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit', p. 46. For the older opinion, see Boehmer, 'Zur Geschichte des Bonifatius', p. 171; Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68 n. 3, repeated by Emerton in *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, p. 47 n. 1. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 179, was inclined to accept Demandt's theory, remarking that the association of the Wedrecii with the Wetterau was problematic because Boniface did not appear to have evangelized the region, which had long been incorporated into

The main river in the area is the Wetschaft, while local place-names include Wetter, Wetterstadt, Wettrehen, Wetterfeld, Wetterburg, and Wethen. Furthermore, that a local identity existed along the river in the eighth century is suggested by its brief appearance in Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* (written 794x800). Eigil recounts how, during the Saxon invasion of 778, the Saxons camped *in Loganacinse*, in the Lahngau, while they considered an attack on Fulda.[41] As the monks of Fulda, including Eigil, fled towards Hammelburg with the relics of St Boniface, Sturm himself 'hurried to Wedereiba'[42] in order to attempt negotiations with the Saxons. Four days after Sturm's departure, word reached Eigil and his companions that the Saxons had been defeated in a battle,[43] which according to the *Annales regni Francorum* occurred at Lihesi.[44] Since Lihesi, modern-day Laisa, lay only 10 kilometres north-west of Kesterburg, this strongly suggests that Eigil's term *Wedereiba* refers to the Wetschaft, not the Wetterau.

Of the remaining three tribes named in Gregory's letter, the Lognai can be securely identified with the inhabitants of the Lahngau, the district of the river Lahn whose *pagus* included the Amöneburg basin, and the Graffelti can be assumed to be the residents of the Grabfeld region around Fulda. The identity of the Suduodi is entirely uncertain. If, as is widely accepted, the names of the tribes in Gregory's address were arranged in pairs according to geographical location (beginning with the Thuringians and proceeding in an anti-clockwise direction),[45] we can place the Suduodi no more precisely than somewhere near the Lognai and the Graffelti.[46] By *c.* 738, therefore, it appears that Boniface's mission in Germania

the Frankish Rhine-Main ecclesiastical landscape. Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46, also follows Demandt, as does Schlesinger, 'Early Medieval Fortifications', p. 246. Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 136–37, expresses dissent in favour of the antiquated identification with the Wetterau, arguing on the weakest grounds that Boniface may have been active in the region after the death of Bishop Gerold of Mainz in 737, even though we know that Mainz was held until 745 by Gerold's son Gewilib, who was equally hostile towards Boniface (see below, Chapter 7, pp. 349–56).

[41] *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 23, p. 376, l. 29.

[42] '[I]n Wedereiba perrexit': *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 23, p. 376, l. 34.

[43] *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 23, p. 376, ll. 42–44.

[44] *Ann. reg. Franc.*, p. 52.

[45] Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46; Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit,' p. 46; Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, p. 130; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 179.

[46] Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, I, 499 n. 3, proposes the district of the Saale, a river between the Lahn and the Grabfeld. Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 46, suggests the region to the south of the Graffelti, between Fulda and Würzburg, and Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 137–40, makes a fuller argument for this. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 179, argues in favour of an identification with the inhabitants of the Sauerland, the hilly region west of the Nistresi.

encompassed the entirety of Hessia and Thuringia, and stretched perhaps as far south as the middle Main. At this date he seems not to have been active in the districts of the middle Rhine and lower Main, which would remain in the hands of hostile Frankish bishops until 745.[47] His influence among the Lognai may also have been limited to the district of Amöneburg, for the middle Lahn, as we saw in the previous chapter, had long been tied to the bishopric of Trier, and Milo of Trier was no friend of Boniface.[48] To the north, Boniface and his followers had thoroughly evangelized the Hessian borderlands and even crossed the Diemel into the territory of the Borthari, suggesting that the fortresses of Eresburg and Gaulskopf had already passed into Frankish hands by this time, perhaps during Charles Martel's Saxon campaigns of the 720s. The next step would be to extend the mission into Saxony. Before we go on to consider the Saxon mission of 738/39, however, we should examine the date and circumstances of Boniface's foundation at Fritzlar.

## The Earliest Monasteries at Büraburg and Fritzlar

### The Date of Fritzlar's Foundation

One of the most significant events during the early mission was Boniface's first minster foundation at Fritzlar. We saw in the previous chapter that Fritzlar had long been at the geographical and political hub of Hessia, and was consequently the focus of Frankish influence in the region. It was also probably the most Christianized area in Hessia, home to families with political and familial ties to the Frankish south. It was therefore the most obvious place for Boniface to establish a monastic community of his own in addition to the pre-existing monastery at Büraburg, a feat which would scarcely have been possible without the considerable patronage and gifts of land that, according to Liudger in his *Vita Gregorii*, local notables gave Boniface 'for the love of God and for the salvation of their souls'.[49]

---

[47] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 387–96.

[48] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 137–43; also Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit', pp. 48–51; Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, pp. 3–5.

[49] 'Ibique coeperunt offerentibus propter amorem Dei et salutem animarum suarum modica loca territoriaque suscipere et in eis ecclesias construere': Liudger, *Vita Gregorii*, chap. 3, p. 70, ll. 30–31. See Schwind, 'Fritzlar', pp. 74–75, and Chapter 7, below, pp. 356–70.

The earliest contemporary reference to a religious community at Fritzlar is a letter written by Boniface upon the death of Abbot Wigbert in 746/47.[50] Willibald, however, states in his vita that Boniface erected two churches after his promotion to archbishop in 732, one dedicated to St Peter in Fritzlar, and the other dedicated to St Michael the Archangel in Amöneburg.[51] The church which Willibald records was built at Fritzlar in 732 need not have been the first such, for the directly contemporary church of St Michael at Amöneburg clearly replaced or supplemented the original chapel which, according to Willibald's own testimony, Boniface had built in 721.[52] The 732 church at Fritzlar also very likely replaced an earlier foundation.[53]

Although the date of this earlier church's foundation is not recorded, Beumann's study of the career of Sturm, whom Boniface sent to Fritzlar as a *puer*, 'boy', helped determine a *terminus ante quem* of 723.[54] Beumann argued convincingly *contra* Stengel, Schieffer, and Tangl[55] that Sturm founded his hermitage

---

[50] Tangl, ep. 40, pp. 64–65. Tangl dated this letter to 737/38, following the judgement of Holder-Egger in his edition of the *Vita Wigberti* that Lupus of Ferrières mistakenly placed Wigbert's death in 746. See Tangl, p. 64 n. 2; *Vita Wigberti*, ed. by Holder-Egger, p. 41 n. 1. Beumann, however, showed that there is no good reason to doubt Lupus's statement that he wrote the vita ninety years after Wigbert's death in 746, as long as we are prepared to accept that the Stirme referred to in the *salutatio* of ep. 40 is not (indeed, cannot be) the same Sturm who founded Hersfeld and was first abbot of Fulda. H. Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr', *HJL*, 6 (1956), 1–24 (especially pp. 9–12). See also Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 66, 68.

[51] '[D]uas uidelicet ecclesias Domino fabricauit: unam quippe in Fridelsare, quam in honore sancti Petri principis apostolorum consecrauit, et alteram in Hamanaburch; hanc etiam in honore sancti Michaelis archangeli dedicauit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 35, ll. 10–14 (he built two churches. One was in Frideslare, which he dedicated to St Peter, Prince of the Apostles. The other was in Amanburch, which he dedicated to St Michael the Archangel; *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, trans. by Talbot, p. 48).

[52] '[M]onasterii, collecta servorum Dei congregatione, cellam construxit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, ll. 3–4.

[53] Schwind, 'Fritzlar', p. 72, following Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr'. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 165, and Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', pp. 281–86, assume that the church of 732 represents the first religious community in Fritzlar.

[54] Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr'. With this article Beumann was countering the critiques offered by Stengel and others of his earlier article, 'Eigils Vita Sturmi und die Anfänge der Klöster Hersfeld und Fulda', *HJL*, 2 (1952), 1–15, in which he had briefly argued (pp. 13–15) for a foundation date for Hersfeld of 736.

[55] E. E. Stengel, 'Zur Frühgeschichte der Reichsabtei Fulda', *Deutches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 9 (1952), 513–34 (pp. 518–19); Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 202, 302; Tangl, *Bonifatiusfragen*, p. 34.

at Hersfeld in 736 rather than 743. Since Sturm's biographer Eigil (writing 794x800) wrote that Sturm spent 'almost three years' preaching before he became a hermit,[56] he must have been ordained priest in or around 734. Also according to Eigil, Sturm had been adopted by Boniface in Bavaria and travelled widely with him before being placed in Fritzlar while still a *puer*,[57] that is between the ages of seven and fourteen.[58] If Sturm was ordained at the canonical age of thirty, this would place his birth in 704 and his *pueritia* between 712 and 718, before Boniface's first visits to Bavaria in 719 and Hessia in 721. However, Boniface himself asked Pope Zacharias in 751 whether it was permissible to ordain priests as young as twenty-five;[59] if, as Beumann suggests, the talented young Sturm had been one such case, he may have been born in 709 and a *puer* between 717 and 723.[60] This date range includes both Boniface's first trip through Bavaria and his earliest years in Hessia.

Such wrangling of dates is important, for it strongly suggests that Fritzlar was founded at an early stage in the Hessian mission, in part to house the child oblates whom we know Boniface was already selecting by 726.[61] It also frees us from relying on the uncertain equation of the earliest church at Fritzlar with the oratory dedicated to St Peter that, according to Willibald, Boniface had built from the wood of Jupiter's Oak at Geismar in 723.[62] It is often assumed that this

---

[56] '[C]umque paene tribus annis sic presbyteratus sui praedicando ac baptizando officium gereret in plebe, caelesti illi inspiratione cogitatio incidit in cor, ut artiori se vita et eremi squalore constringeret': *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 4, p. 367, ll. 5–6.

[57] 'Tunc etiam puer Sturmi precatu parentum ab eo [Bonifatio] susceptus [...]. Cumque pluribus provinciis peragratis, ad Frideslar Hessionum in regionem, sancti viri coenobium, tandem pervenissent, obilem puerum suo cuidam presbytero nomine Wigberto sanctus commendavit episcopus': *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 2, p. 366, ll. 26–32.

[58] This was the age of boyhood, *pueritia*, as defined by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies*: Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarvm sive originvm*, ed. by W. M. Lindsey, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), XI. 2. 2–3.

[59] Tangl, ep. 87, p. 199, ll. 13–19.

[60] Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr', pp. 15–17.

[61] Gregory, who was about the same age as Sturm, also accompanied Boniface during his earliest years in Hessia and may have remained at Fritzlar for extended periods. See Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, chap. 3, p. 70, ll. 27–40. According to a letter of 726, Boniface was accepting infants (*in infantiae annis*, i.e., children up to seven years old) as oblates by this date, and must have had institutions in which to place them. See Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 12–17.

[62] '[R]oborem quendam mirae magnitudinis, qui prisco paganorum vocabulo appellatur robor Iobis, in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere [...] succidere temptavit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, ll. 11–14.

wooden oratory was the predecessor to the stone church of St Peter in Fritzlar erected in 732,[63] but this is far from certain.[64]

## The Nature of the Community at Büraburg

As discussed in the previous chapter,[65] when Boniface arrived at Büraburg in 721 there was already a Hiberno-Frankish monastic complex capable of housing an abbot and six monks (see Fig. 16, p. 179). We may well ask ourselves why he felt the need to establish a new monastic community at Fritzlar almost immediately. There is no evidence that it was due to conflict between him and clerics at Büraburg; had there been such a conflict, Willibald would probably have incorporated it into the *Vita Bonifatii* as a parallel to the events at Amöneburg and a foreshadowing of Boniface's later struggles against the corrupt Frankish church. Rather, Boniface may have been following the example of St Augustine, who established his archiepiscopal see within Canterbury itself and a monastery dedicated to St Peter and St Paul outside the city walls to the west.[66] A monastic community at Fritzlar, unlike Büraburg, would not have to survive in the midst of a military garrison, and nor would its members be distracted by the inevitable long-standing social and political ties of the church with the Frankish elite. Boniface could afford to involve the community at Büraburg more closely in the world of episcopal government knowing that there was a quieter haven of prayer and education just across the river. It was, in other words, a clever compromise between his calling as missionary and his training as monk, between the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa*.

Boniface's choice of Büraburg, not Fritzlar, for the seat of Bishop Witta in 741 supports this interpretation, but this did not happen until two decades into the mission. What was the status of the church at Büraburg until then? Contemporary historical sources do not help us, for there are no references to Büraburg before Boniface's letter to Pope Zacharias in 742,[67] but Wand does lend

---

[63] See, among many other examples, Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 206; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 41; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 148; Schwind, 'Fritzlar', p. 72.

[64] For a full discussion of the issues involved and the location of the Geismar shrine, see Chapter 7, below, pp. 295–307.

[65] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 177–84.

[66] *HE*, I. 33, pp. 114–15.

[67] Tangl, ep. 50, p. 81, l. 22.

some credence to an early fourteenth-century Fritzlar tradition that Boniface at some point transferred a monastic community (*coenobium fratrum*) from Büraburg to Fritzlar. He also observes that the antiquity of the church at Büraburg, known as the *primitiva ecclesia in Hassia*, was always acknowledged by the local church in the later medieval period, even though it had been subordinate to the archdiaconate of Fritzlar since at least the twelfth century. A further tradition is recorded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the Anglo-Saxon Witta was abbot of a community at Büraburg before he was consecrated bishop in 741, and that his predecessor as abbot was an otherwise unattested individual named Humbert. Both Humbert and Witta were said to have been buried at the church of Büraburg. The same post-medieval tradition claims that Megingoz, Bishop of Würzburg from 753, followed Witta as abbot.[68]

How far can these late traditions be trusted? Since Humbert is an authentic Anglo-Saxon name and Bishop Witta of Büraburg is a known historical figure, the tradition of an Abbot Humbert at Büraburg before 741 is fairly credible. Vonderau's excavations inside the church did indeed reveal two individuals who had been buried in wooden coffins beneath the chancel floor, tentatively identified by Wand as Humbert and Witta.[69] At some point, then, the small community at Büraburg, whatever happened to the monks who were already there in 723, had the Anglo-Saxon Humbert appointed over it. After Humbert's death, certainly before 741, Witta was appointed abbot and then consecrated bishop. As we shall see below, he appears to have died or retired shortly after 746/47.[70] Where Megingoz fits into this is less clear; he was a deacon at Fritzlar in 746 and consecrated bishop at Würzburg in 753, which leaves a space of only seven years within which to fit both his ordination as priest and his career as Abbot of Büraburg.[71] Conditions on the mission frontier, however, were becoming increasingly desperate from the mid-740s, and could only have been worsened by the almost simultaneous loss of the veterans Wigbert at Fritzlar and Witta at Büraburg in or after 746/47. Boniface, occupied with his new see at Mainz and personally responsible for the maintenance of the mission on the borderlands, must have sought to ensure the stability of the central Hessian church as quickly and effectively as possible. The rapid promotion of the competent Frankish

---

[68] Wand, 'St Brigida auf dem Büraberg', pp. 12, 17.

[69] Wand, 'St Brigida auf dem Büraberg', pp. 28–29.

[70] See below, pp. 229–34.

[71] Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr', p. 12, sees no problem with this timescale.

deacon Megingoz — the most senior figure at Fritzlar after Abbot Tatwin and Prior Wigbert — to priest and abbot of the tiny community of Büraburg would not be surprising in this context.

## The Nature of the Community at Fritzlar

Fritzlar was selected by Boniface from the outset as the organizational centre of his Hessian mission, a place where young recruits such as Sturm could be raised among a religious community and trained as missionary preachers. Yet whereas Boniface seems to have intended his later foundation at Fulda in 744 to be a model monastic community governed under the Rule of St Benedict,[72] the precise nature of the earliest foundation at Fritzlar is less clear.[73] Eigil, writing 794x800, called Wigbert, apparently head of the Fritzlar community at the time of Sturm's arrival, a priest rather than an abbot.[74] In the letter Boniface wrote after Wigbert's death in 746/47, he referred to Wigbert as *pater noster*, although he also said that Tatwin was to be the new abbot of the community, which implies that the office had previously been held by Wigbert.[75] Finally, Lupus, in his *Vita Wigberti* (836), erroneously claimed that Boniface first summoned Wigbert to Fritzlar after he received the see of Mainz (746) and charged him, as *abbas*, with establishing monastic rule over a pre-existing community.[76] Holder-Egger reasonably assumed that Lupus was confusing the date of Boniface's acceptance of the bishopric of Mainz (746) with the date of his promotion to missionary archbishop (732), which event also marked the construction of the new church at Fritzlar.[77] Lupus is still in error, however, for Eigil, as we have seen, recorded that the young Sturm had been placed under the priest Wigbert's guidance in Fritzlar as early as 723.

---

[72] See Boniface's letter of 751 to Pope Zacharias concerning the foundation of Fulda: 'monasterium construentes monachos constituimus sub regula sancti patris Benedicti viventes' (Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 22–24).

[73] Schwind, 'Fritzlar', p. 73.

[74] '[N]obilem puerum suo cuidam presbytero nomine Wigberto sanctus commendavit episcopus': *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 2, p. 366, ll. 31–32.

[75] Tangl, ep. 40, p. 65, ll. 6–7, 15.

[76] 'Neque multo post ad amplissimum pontificalis gradum dignitatis Mogonciaci divina gratia provectus, Wigbertum sacerdotem secundi ordinis cenobio suo, cui nomen est gentili Germanorum lingua Friteslar, magistrum prefecit, uti monasticae illic religionis normam statumque componeret': *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 5, p. 39, ll. 34–36.

[77] *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 5, p. 39 n. 7.

It is worth considering the explanation that Lupus mistook the year of Wigbert's appointment as Abbot of Fritzlar (732) for the year of his arrival (prior to 723), and further confused Boniface's reception of the pallium with his reception of the see of Mainz. Hence Wigbert, immediately subservient to Boniface, may have been the head of a small community of monks and oblates at Fritzlar for roughly a decade before its church was rebuilt in 732, at which time he was given the formal status of abbot.

The pre-732 community at Fritzlar, as well as the community at Büraburg, although they must have been regulated in some fashion, need not have been organized strictly according to the Rule of St Benedict. As we saw in Chapter 3, historians have long acknowledged that the Benedict's rule was not nearly as widespread and dominant in its early centuries as was once supposed, either on the Continent or in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[78] Adaptability and variation were prominent features of monastic rules across Europe until the late eighth century, and at Fritzlar in particular, an infant missionary minster on the troubled northeast border of Frankish territory, adaptability may have been essential to its very survival. The monks who evangelized central Hessia continued to use what could be considered the 'double foundation' of Büraburg-Fritzlar as a base both for pastoral care and for the education of trainee missionaries who were sent progressively farther into the borderlands through the 720s and 30s. With the foundation of ever more churches and chapels among the newly converted communities of Hessia and the donation of property by their inhabitants, Büraburg-Fritzlar's importance as the economic and administrative centre of a minster network steadily increased.

## *The Evangelization of the Hessian-Saxon Borderlands, 738–54*

### The Saxon Mission of 738/39

A matter on which Willibald remained virtually silent in his vita is the degree to which Boniface attempted to evangelize the Saxon borderlands. His comment that in 721 Boniface preached 'close to the borders of the Saxons'[79] does not suggest that Boniface actually ventured among them. A contemporary witness, however, the West Saxon missionary Wiehtberht, informed the monks of

---

[78] See Chapter 3, above, pp. 84–92.

[79] '[I]uxta fines Saxonum': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, ll. 4–5.

Glastonbury some time between 732 and 754 that he had been preaching 'within the borders of the pagan Hessians and Saxons'.[80] As we saw in the previous chapter, we should properly think of a permeable border *region* rather than a strict geographical division between Hessians and Saxons.[81] Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that a missionary party travelling in northernmost Hessia would also pass through districts settled by Saxons, and we saw above that by 738 Boniface's mission had reached, if tentatively, into the lands beyond the Diemel.[82]

Whether or not Boniface ever attempted a coordinated mission beyond the fringes of Saxon settlement in Hessia is another matter, and has been among the most widely disputed aspects of Boniface's career.[83] The biographer Willibald, as stated above, has nothing to say on the issue; if he knew that Boniface had attempted to evangelize Saxony, he chose not to mention it. The material at the centre of the scholarly debate comprises four letters. The first is from Boniface to the entire Anglo-Saxon church, in which he urged his compatriots to pray for the imminent conversion of the Old Saxons.[84] The second is from Gregory III to Boniface, in which he congratulated Boniface for having converted 'as many as one hundred thousand' pagans in Germania with the aid of Charles Martel.[85] The third letter, also from Gregory III, exhorted the Old Saxons *en masse* to accept

[80] '[I]n confinia paganorum Haesonum ac Saxonum': Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 12–13.

[81] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 157–68.

[82] See above, pp. 197–200.

[83] There is an old German historiographical tradition of studies dedicated to reconstructing Boniface's missionary activities on the borders of Hesse and Thuringia with Saxony based on the evidence of dedications, ecclesiastical boundaries, tribal territories, and later medieval traditions. Only a sample of the pre-1954 literature need be given here: Boehmer, 'Zur Geschichte des Bonifatius'; L. Naumann, 'Die Einfuhrung und Befestigung des Christentums in den Gauen Friesenfeld und Hassegau', *Manfelder Blätter*, 34/35 (1925), 1–83; K. Löffler, *Der Hülfensberg im Eichsfeld eine Bonifatiusstätte?* (Duderstadt: Mecke, 1925); E. Hennecke, 'Miszellen zur Kirchengeschichte Altsachsens', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 54 (1935), 52–86; J. Prinz, 'Die fränkische Mission in Hameln und die Anfänge des Bonifatiusstiftes', in *Geschichte der Stadt Hameln*, ed. by H. Spanuth, 2 vols (Hameln: Seifert, 1939–40), I, 65–73; H. Büttner, 'Das Erzstift Mainz und die Sachsenmission', *Jahrbuch für das Bistum Mainz*, 5 (1950), 314–28; Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', pp. 133–86.

[84] Tangl, ep. 46, pp. 74–75. One reply to this letter, from Bishop Torthelm of Leicester (r. 737–64), survives in the Bonifatian correspondence: Tangl, ep. 47, pp. 75–76.

[85] 'Agnoscentes itaque in sillabis fraternitatis tuae innotuisti tam de Germaniae gentibus, quas sua pietate Deus noster de potestate paganorum liberavit et ad centum milia animas in sinu sanctae matris ecclesiae tuo conamine et Carli principis Francorum aggregare dignatus est': Tangl, ep. 45, p. 72, ll. 1–5.

Christ.[86] The fourth is a circular letter written by Boniface in Rome to his major subordinates in the mission field.[87] The second letter, from Gregory III to Boniface, is dated 29 October 739, and Tangl associates the first and third letters with this one.[88] Böhmer, following Tangl, argues that Gregory's comments in the second letter refer to the successful campaign of Charles Martel against the Saxons the previous year.[89] The fourth letter dates from Boniface's final stay in Rome in 737/38.

Boniface's letter to the Anglo-Saxon church clearly illustrates his powerful longing to convert the Old Saxons, but opinions differ as to how far his desires were ever put into action. Levison merely states that the much-desired mission was 'premature' (the Saxons finally converted only in the reign of Charlemagne),[90] while Rademacher and Schieffer consider that Boniface's early success was probably restricted to border peoples whom Charles Martel had freed from Saxon domination, and that he made little lasting progress beyond the borderlands.[91] Greenaway argues that the Pope forced Boniface to cancel his planned mission in Saxony before he could attempt it,[92] and Tangl stated that the Pope considered that a full-scale mission in Saxony would put too great a strain on Boniface's resources, although he did offer papal support for some limited work among the border Saxons.[93] Flaskamp, meanwhile, vociferously disagreed that Boniface seriously planned any mission in Saxony in 738/39, and argued that the one hundred thousand converts referred to in Gregory's letter represented the sum total of Boniface's baptisms over the previous twenty years, not new converts.[94]

---

[86] Tangl, ep. 21, pp. 35–36.

[87] Tangl, ep. 41, p. 66.

[88] M. Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe, Teil I', *Neues Archiv*, 40 (1916), 639–790 (pp. 758–60).

[89] The campaign is recounted in *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 19, p. 177, ll. 4–9. Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, p. 18; Tangl, ep. 45, p. 72 n. 1.

[90] Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 77–78.

[91] Rademacher, 'Anfänge der Sachsenmission', pp. 164, 171; Rademacher, 'Die erfolgreiche Sachsenmission des hl. Bonifatius im Jahr 738', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 38 (1954), 100–30; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 179–80.

[92] Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, pp. 36–37.

[93] Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe', pp. 758–59.

[94] F. Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief von Herford', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 44 (1962), 315–34 (pp. 326–27); F. Flaskamp, 'Bonifatius und die Sachsenmission', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 6 (1916), 273–90.

More recent scholars have not considered the matter in great detail; Reuter aligned himself firmly with Flaskamp's opinion,[95] Wallace-Hadrill, Wood, Felten, Nonn, and Best state that Boniface's Saxon mission was effectively abortive,[96] and Löwe, Padberg, and Wagner believe that Boniface enjoyed initial success that he was unable to consolidate.[97]

Much of the debate hinges on what Boniface's intentions were in 738. In the letter he wrote from Rome to his brethren in Germania during this year, Boniface states that Pope Gregory III 'received us with joy and gave a joyful response concerning our legation, and advised and commanded that we should return to you once again and continue in our established work'.[98] It has been suggested that Boniface had approached Gregory III with an intended change in the course of his mission, but had been advised against it. Tangl was confident that Boniface's proposed plan was a full-scale mission among the Saxons in the wake of Charles Martel's campaign, which was underway at the time.[99] Flaskamp instead suggested that Boniface did not intend to return to Germania at all, but that his thwarted intention in 738 was to retire permanently in Rome as a *peregrinus*; he did not even know about Charles Martel's campaign and built no great plans on an 'everyday event' like a Frankish-Saxon border conflict. After he obeyed Gregory's injuction to reorganize the Bavarian church in 739, Boniface's new plan, according to Flaskamp, was to oust Bishop Vivilo from the see of Passau and assume it as his own permanent metropolitan seat.[100] Gregory, however, would not allow

---

[95] Reuter, 'Boniface and Europe', p. 91 n. 65.

[96] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 153–55; Wood, 'An Absence of Saints?', p. 336; F. Felten, 'Zur Einführung in die Vortragsreihe: Bonifatius — Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Felten, pp. 11–32 (p. 21); U. Nonn, 'Zwangsmission mit Feuer und Schwert? Zur Sachsenmission Karls des Großen', ibid., pp. 55–74 (p. 55); Best and Löwe, 'Die Ausgrabungen', p. 182. Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', does not make any reference to the possibility of a Bonifatian mission.

[97] H. Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius: Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, II: *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. by K. Schäferdiek (Munich: Kaiser, 1978), pp. 192–226 (p. 212); Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 58–59; Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 237–38.

[98] '[N]os cum gaudio apostolicus pontifex suscepit et de legatione nostra laeta responsa reddidit et consilium et preceptum dedit, ut iterum ad vos revertamus et in certo labore persistamus': Tangl, ep. 41, p. 66, ll. 10–14.

[99] Tangl, ep. 41, p. 66 n. 7; Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe', pp. 758–59.

[100] Flaskamp, 'Die Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 326–27.

this. As he wrote to Boniface: 'You are not at liberty, brother, to stay in one place where your work has been completed, but strengthen the hearts of the brothers and all the faithful who inhabit those places of the West; wherever the Lord reveals to you the road to salvation, do not cease from your preaching.'[101]

Since the letters do not clearly describe Boniface's intentions in 738 or 739, we must rely on inference and context to make a judgement. To begin with, Gregory's injunction in 738 that Boniface should return and continue in his 'established work', *certo labore*, need not imply that the Pope had declined to support an expansion to the mission; Boniface's mandate had always been to evangelize Germania in general, not only Hessia and Thuringia. There is certainly no evidence to support Flaskamp's theory that Boniface, frustrated by Charles Martel's lack of enthusiasm for his mission, desired to retire in Rome in 738. And although Boniface in his lost letter of 739 apparently did moot to the Pope the possibility of his settling in one district, Gregory's reply does not help us identify where that was. There is no reason to suppose that Boniface wanted to abandon twenty years of work in Germania in favour of Bavaria. He had visited Bavaria in 719, again in 736/37 on his way to Rome, and finally in 738/39 during his return from Rome to Hessia and Thuringia. In other words, he had spent relatively little time in Bavaria, and few, if any, of his close friends were based there; some years later, indeed, Boniface chose to delegate his episcopal authority in Bavaria in order to refocus his efforts in Germania, and when he finally did express a clear intent to retire, it was to Fulda, in the middle of his mission territory.[102] Furthermore, Charles Martel's major campaign of 738 was not an 'everyday event', as Flaskamp described it: on the contrary, the annals record no Frankish incursions into Saxony during the previous nine years.[103] Finally, in a letter of 742x46 to Abbess Eadburg, Boniface asked her to pray on behalf of 'those pagans who have been entrusted to us by the Apostolic see'.[104] Unless he had recently expanded his

---

[101] 'Nec enim habebis licentiam, frater, percepti laboris in uno morari loco. Sed confirmato corda fratrum et omnium fidelium, qui rures sunt in illis Speriis partibus; ubi tibi Dominus aperuerit viam salutis, predicare non desistas': Tangl, ep. 45, p. 73, ll. 16–17.

[102] 'In quo loco cum consensu pietatis vestrae proposui aliquantulum vel paucis diebus fessum senectute corpus requiescendo recuperare et post mortem iacere': Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 29–31.

[103] The last recorded campaign was in 728 according to the *Ann. Petav.*, p. 9, corrected to 729 by Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, p. 16, although accepted by Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, p. 117.

[104] '[P]ro istis paganis, qui nobis ab apostolica sede commissi sunt': Tangl, ep. 65, p. 137, ll. 25–26.

mission field in central Germania, it is difficult to see where these *pagani* had been for the previous twenty years, and why he had not already converted them.

If, as seems likely, Boniface was proposing an extension to his mission in 738, the contextual evidence of the letters points towards Saxony. Gregory's blanket address to the 'universus populus provinciae Altsaxonum' included an unambiguous reference to Saxons who had already been evangelized, if not converted, and to others who were about to be evangelized.[105] The one hundred thousand converts whom Boniface claimed to have won in Germania by 739 with the assistance of Charles Martel[106] may refer to mass baptisms in Saxony, as most scholars have supposed (although they do not tend to take the figure literally),[107] or, as Flaskamp believed, may refer to Boniface's accumulated success since 719.[108] I would lean towards the former theory in order to explain its appearance in Gregory's letter at this particular time. In either case, Gregory's address to the Old Saxons and the testimony of the missionary priest Wiehtberht prove that Boniface did make some attempt between 732 and 754 to evangelize Saxon communities in the borderlands. The evidence only suggests that Boniface's mission among the Saxons was not a lasting success, not that it never took place at all; and if his Saxon mission was a disaster on a much greater scale than that of the two Hewalds *c.* 695,[109] we can find a potential cause in the violence that engulfed the Frankish-Saxon frontier from the mid 740s onwards.

### The Turbulent Final Years of the Mission, 745–54

Boniface, then, did make a concerted attempt to evangelize the Saxon borderlands in 738/39, and may have had considerable success among the defeated and demoralized communities who lay in the path of the Frankish army. But whatever ground he gained beyond the northern fringes of Hessia must have been virtually impossible to consolidate during the near-incessant warfare that plagued the

---

[105] '[V]olens vos scire, qualem solicitudinem habeam pro vobis' et pro his, qui verbum exhortationis fidei Iesu Christi domini nostri susceperunt et qui adhuc suscepturi sunt': Tangl, ep. 21, p. 35, ll. 10–11.

[106] Tangl, ep. 45, p. 72, ll. 1–5.

[107] Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 180; cf. Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', p. 168; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 59; Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, p. 41.

[108] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 326–27.

[109] *HE*, v. 10, pp. 299–301.

Frankish and Saxon borders for the next fifteen years, and his own missionary ambitions in Saxony were to be pushed aside by those of the Bishop of Cologne. In 743 Charles Martel's son Carloman captured Heeseberg, a fortified hill to the north of Thuringia.[110] The following year he extracted tribute from the eastern Saxons and, according to the *Continuations of Fredegar*, forced many to be baptized.[111] Boniface reported to the Pope in 745 that his territory had been invaded by the pagans, and Gregory's comparison of the disaster to former sackings of Rome suggests that serious damage had been done.[112] In 748 the eastern Saxons were roused to rebellion by Pippin's half-brother Grifo, but were defeated, again with a report of mass baptisms.[113]

These disturbances were concentrated in eastern Saxony, to the immediate north of Boniface's mission territory in Thuringia, which may indicate that the Saxon border with Hessia was still relatively subdued after the campaign of 738. By 751, however, Boniface's missionaries were reporting new rumblings of rebellion on the frontier.[114] An invading Saxon force destroyed more than thirty of Boniface's churches in the Hessian borderlands in 752,[115] and in 753, the year

---

[110] *Ann. Laures.*, p. 2, refers to Carloman's 743 invasion of Saxony in which he obtained the surrender of 'the fortification called *Heeseberg*' (coepit castrum, quod dicitur Hoohseoburg, per placitum). An identification with the eighth-century Saxon fortification at Heeseberg, 125 km north of Erfurt, is now generally accepted. See W.-D. Steinmetz, 'Watenstedt, die Hünenburg auf dem Heeseberg', in *Das Braunschweiger Land*, ed. by W.-D. Steinmetz, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 34 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1997), pp. 277–81.

[111] *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 27, p. 180, ll. 25–28; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 4–5; *Ann. Petav.*, p. 11. H. Hahn, *Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reiches* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1863), p. 174, equated the campaign of 743 with that of 744, but Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, pp. 23–24, trust that the various minor annals are recording two separate campaigns.

[112] Only the reply of Zacharias, dated 31 October 745, has survived: 'De incursione autem gentium, quae in tuis plebibus facta est, merendum nobis est. Sed haec adversitatis nullatenus tuam fraternitatem conturbet. Quia et Roma civitas ex accidentitibus facinoribus sepius est depopulata, et tamen omnipotentia sua Dominus ex supernis eam dignatus est consolare' (Tangl, ep. 60, p. 121, ll. 4–8).

[113] *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 181, ll. 14–22; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 7–8; *Ann. Fuld.*, p. 346, ll. 11–15. *Fred. Cont.* and *Ann. reg. Franc.* place the war with Grifo in 747, but Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, p. 30, argue that the claim of *Ann. Fuld.* for 748 is preferable.

[114] Pope Zacharias wrote to Boniface in November of 751 in response to his concerns that some of his missionaries were threatened by imminent pagan invasion. Tangl, ep. 86, p. 200, ll. 3–8.

[115] Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 15–21. Since Pippin's retaliatory campaign was restricted to western Saxony, this was probably the source of the Saxon attack in 752.

before Boniface's death, Pippin retaliated by crossing the Rhine and laying waste to large areas of Saxony.[116] The *Annales Mettenses* report that Bishop Hildegar of Cologne, another opponent of Boniface, was killed by the Saxons at the fortress of Iburg, just 25 kilometres north of the Diemel, although it is unclear whether he was murdered or died in battle.[117] The annals go on to state that Pippin extracted from the vanquished Saxons an annual tribute of three hundred horses and an agreement to receive missionaries and accept baptism.[118] Finally, in 758, Pippin led an invasion force across the Rhine as far as Sythen, between Paderborn and Utrecht, and renewed the annual tribute.[119]

Reuter questioned whether the mass baptisms recorded by the annals as taking place in Saxony in 744, 748, and 753 in fact occurred. He considered them to be anachronistic elaborations by later annalists, for the Franks did not employ the policy of mass baptism in contemporary campaigns in Frisia and Bavaria, and there is only solid evidence for its use from the time of Charlemagne.[120] This objection is not entirely convincing, for it fails to explain why contemporary entries pertaining to Frisia were not similarly elaborated by the annalists,[121] and the murder of Hildegar at Iburg in 753 shows that the Frankish church was to some degree involved in the Saxon campaigns. Yet even if Pippin did force mass baptisms upon defeated Saxons, Hildegar's very presence makes it unlikely that Boniface was directly involved. Pippin's campaigns of 753 and 758 in west Saxony were concentrated on the region of the Ruhr and Lippe, which lay adjacent to the diocese of Cologne. Hildegar had received the see of Cologne instead of Boniface, and before they died the two were involved in a bitter dispute over the control of the see of Utrecht, at the heart of which lay the evangelization of the lands across the Rhine.[122] As if this were not enough, Hildegar was precisely the type of

---

[116] *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 182, ll. 19–27; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 10–11. On dating to 753, not 752 as some minor annals claim, see Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, p. 35.

[117] 'Hildegarius tamen episcopus occisus est a Saxonibus in castro quod dicitur Iubergh': *Ann. Mett.*, p. 44, ll. 6–7. This is the Iburg near Bad Driburg, not Iburg near Osnabrück as suggested by von Simpson, ibid., p. 44 n. 4.

[118] *Ann. Mett.*, p. 44, ll. 7–11.

[119] *Ann. Mett.*, p. 50, ll. 3–9; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 16–17.

[120] Reuter, 'Boniface and Europe', p. 92 n. 67.

[121] See Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', p. 169, who considered the mass baptisms to have been an important religio-political tool of Pippin that Charlemagne adopted and employed on a larger scale.

[122] Tangl, ep. 109, pp. 234–36.

Frankish 'warrior bishop' Boniface despised and refused to associate with.[123] Even supposing that he was given the option, it seems extremely unlikely that Boniface would have chosen to cooperate in evangelizing Saxony with such a man.

The record of the annals presents an image of considerable turbulence in Saxony during the final fifteen years of Boniface's mission in Hessia, which, at least in 745 and 752, had a highly damaging effect on his work in Thuringia and Hessia respectively. After this there are no more recorded Frankish campaigns in Saxony until Charlemagne's capture of Eresburg, on the northern border of Hessia, in 772. Immediately after capturing Eresburg, Charlemagne went on to destroy Irminsul, 'the great pillar', a major Saxon shrine.[124] This event is of considerable importance for our concerns, for it shows that a district that had been thoroughly evangelized by Boniface before 738 contained a large Saxon fortification and pagan shrine in 772, eighteen years after his death. We also know that the Kassel district was an area of mixed Frankish and Saxon settlement in the 770s.[125] Whether it occurred during or after Boniface's life, a significant region gained by the missionaries must therefore have been lost to the Saxons by this time.

The excavations at Gaulskopf may provide an illustration of this (Fig. 19). They revealed a series of postholes that described a wooden building 11.2 by 5 metres wide, and orientated precisely east-west with a porch at the west end. This particular form of a long hall with western porch is also found in known early medieval chapels in Bavaria,[126] and this comparison, along with the presence of three west-east adult inhumations lying immediately outside the northern wall of the building, leads Best confidently to identify the structure as a church. Especially interesting was the presence of fire-reddened socket stones in the southern post holes, which showed that the building had been destroyed by fire. The lack of pottery material from the building makes it difficult to date. The fact that the three burials associated with it were decapitated by a later building places it within the earlier of at least two distinct building phases dating somewhere between the mid-seventh century and the ninth or early tenth century, when the fort was abandoned.[127] Best entertains the possibility of a Bonifatian date, but dismisses it

---

[123] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 349–56.

[124] *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 32–35.

[125] See below, pp. 217–25.

[126] Best and Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen', p. 168.

[127] The burials, lying side by side, were complete except for their skulls, which the osteological analysis of the skeletons revealed had been removed postmortem. Since the grave cuts were
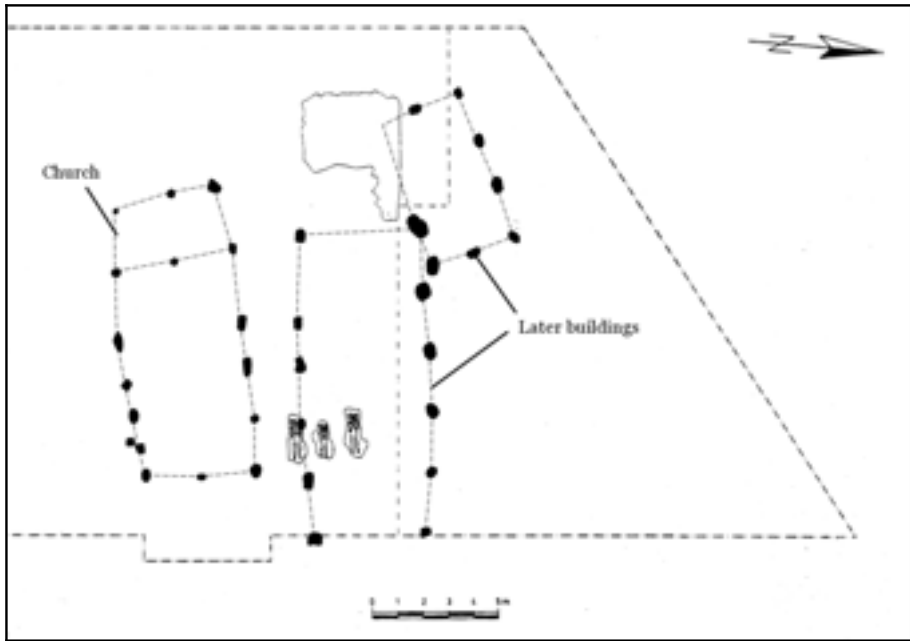
Fig. 19. Eighth-century church at Gaulskopf. A possible Bonifatian foundation.

as unlikely due to the lack of known church foundations in the Saxon region before the wars of 772–804. He prefers to regard the church as contemporary with Charlemagne's foundation on Eresburg in 785.[128]

The archaeological evidence, however, presents problems with this date, as Best in part acknowledges. First of all, the disturbance of the burials outside the church by new construction demonstrates that the graveyard had been out of use for some time before this second building phase, or else that the builders did not respect the burials they knew to be there.[129] There are further problems with placing the church in the late eighth century. We know that the building was burned to the ground and not rebuilt; this points towards deliberate rather than accidental destruction. It also seems to have been in use for a short period, judging

themselves too short to accommodate the heads, Best theorizes that each corpse was placed in its grave with the head pushed forwards. Because the skulls were closer to the surface than the rest of the skeletons, they were the only part destroyed by later building activity. See Best and Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen', pp. 165–66.

[128] Best and Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen', pp. 181–82.

[129] Best and Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen', p. 182.

from the presence of only three burials in the adjacent plot of land, a large area of which was exposed during the excavation. Finally, Charlemagne did not found a church on Eresburg until 785, seven years after the last Saxon incursion south of the Diemel. If he founded a church on Gaulskopf around the same time, it is difficult to explain who burned it to the ground, and why it was not rebuilt.

None of these observations is conclusive without datable material from the building itself. But the evidence suggests that the church at Gaulskopf was in use for only a brief period before it was deliberately destroyed and not rebuilt, and that either the site was left unused for many years, or it was quickly built on by people who were not troubled by decapitating existing Christian burials. Taken together, this fits the context of Charlemagne's wars less happily than it does the period from the beginning of Boniface's Saxon mission in 738/39 to the Saxon rebellion of 752, when we know that Christian churches were deliberately burned on a large scale. The aftermath of this disaster caused Boniface to be late in congratulating the newly installed pope, Stephen II: 'This', he wrote, 'is because I was preoccupied in the reconstruction of churches burned by the pagans, who have pillaged and burned more than thirty churches among our parishes and cells.'[130]

Best, citing Winkelmann, objected to a Bonifatian date for the church because there are no definite church foundations in 'the region of Saxon influence', that is, Westfalia, before Charlemagne.[131] Yet Gaulskopf lies precisely in the Hessian-Saxon borderlands, and during Boniface's mission was an important stronghold whose lord must have been of some political and social influence. As such it would have been a prime location for a new church when the mission expanded beyond the Diemel in 738/39, if not earlier, and would undoubtedly have been targeted during the anti-Christian uprising of 752. Since the available archaeological material fits this context, it seems possible that the excavations at Gaulskopf have produced the first direct evidence for both the foundation and destruction of one of Boniface's original missionary churches. If this is the case, the three burials outside the church would have been members of the Christian community, and the fact that one had a healed defence wound on the left forearm provides a further illustration of the high level of violence in society at this time.

---

[130] 'Sed hoc idcirco contigit, quia preoccupatus fui in restauratione ecclesiarum, quas pagani incenderunt; qui per titulos et cellas nostras plus quam XXX êcclesias vastarunt et incenderunt': Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 17–20.

[131] Best and Löwe, 'Die Ausgrabungen, p. 181. See W. Winkelmann, 'Frühgeschichte und Frühmittelalter', in *Westfälische Geschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des alten Reiches*, ed. by W. Kohl (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983), pp. 187–230 (pp. 219–20).

## The Herford Letter of Gregory III Concerning the Saxon Mission

There remains one piece of evidence to discuss in relation to Boniface's Saxon mission of 738/39, which is a letter purportedly from Gregory III to Boniface, in which the Pope praised Boniface's success in Saxony and named four Saxon nobles who had converted to Christianity. It is dated 30 June; the year is not given, but, if genuine, it would have to predate Gregory's death in November 741, and by the tone and contents would post-date Gregory's genuine letter of November 739. The letter survives only as an interpolation in the fourteenth-century *Vita Waltgeri*, which was written by Wigand, a monk based at the monastery of Herford in Saxony.[132] According to his vita, Waltger was a ninth-century saint whose grandfather Aldolf, a Saxon noble, had converted to Christianity during the reign of Charlemagne. Wigand inserted the letter from Gregory into his vita in order to illustrate the joy of the Pope at Boniface's successful conversion of the Saxons, but made little of it; it is, indeed, something of an oddity and a non sequitur within the text.[133] Since it was not published by Tangl in his edition of Boniface's letters, I present it here in full:

> Gregory, servant of the servants of God, to his most pious brother and fellow bishop Boniface, apostolic greetings.
>
> Blessed God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy and through your preaching has regenerated Saxony in living hope,[134] has led its princes, that is Eoban, Rutwic, Wuldericus and Dedda, 'out of the shadows of ignorance and into his marvelous light, so that they now may be a people purchased for God,'[135] seeing as through the faith that they received from you they recognize the face of eternal light.
>
> The priest Denehard[136] conveyed the letter from your sweetness, through which, read by Archdeacon Stephen of St Susanna,[137] we learned that the 'labourers in the Word of

---

[132] The *Vita Waltgeri* is edited by R. Wilmans, *Die Kaiserurkunden der Provinz Westfalen, 777–1313*, 2 vols (Münster: 1867–81), I, 275–318.

[133] K. Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors III. an Bonifatius über die Sachsenmission', *Historiches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, 76 (1957), 83–106 (pp. 88–89).

[134] I Peter 1. 3.

[135] I Peter 2. 9.

[136] Probably the Denehard of Tangl, ep. 49, p. 78, l. 12 ; ep. 51, p. 86, ll. 14–15; ep. 59, p. 109, l. 12; and ep. 113, p. 245, l. 10, who, along with Lul, met and joined Boniface in Rome in 737/38 and became Boniface's main Roman envoy.

[137] *De titulo* followed by a genitive was an early medieval formula, common in papal letters, referring to the church at which the named person was based. On the identity of this archdeacon and his church, see Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', pp. 97–101. Boniface himself refers to his missionary churches as *tituli* in his letter to Pope Stephen II; see Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, l. 18.

God in Saxony are few, while the harvest that sprouts forth is great'.[138] Therefore we have sent from our parts Dodo,[139] of the Church of the Pastor, so that he should come before the renowned princes in the Word of God, and have committed him in our stead to the care of that preaching.

Furthermore, sweetest one, we advise that you fell those trees that the natives worship, just as you brought down the so-called Tree of Jupiter that was venerated by the natives.[140]

Concerning the followers of Aldebert and Clemens, we wish you to pronounce them banished from the church, and know that they are anathemetized by us and by the blessed Peter in the coming day of eternal judgement and are excluded from the company of the just, lest they rise up again.

Given on the day before the Kalends of July at the church of St Paul.[141]

Since the letter is unattested in any other source or collection of papal letters, including those preserved in Mainz, it has been readily dismissed as an obvious forgery by most historians and generally ignored by Bonifatian scholars.[142] The

---

[138] Matthew 9. 37. The metaphor of harvest occurs frequently in the letters of Boniface; see Chapter 6, below, pp. 253–57.

[139] In the opinion of Honselman, Dodo is to be equated with the Anglo-Saxon abbot Duddo of Tangl, ep. 34, p. 58, former pupil of Boniface in Wessex, who was resident in Rome in 735 ('Der Brief Gregors', pp. 101–02). Heinrich Hahn believed that Duddo worked at the papal archives in Rome (*Bonifaz und Lul: Ihre angelsächsischen Korrespondenten, Bischof Luls Leben* (Leipzig: Veit und Comp, 1883), pp. 164–66), although Emerton was sceptical of this (*The Letters of St Boniface*, p. 41 n. 1).

[140] Presumably a reference to Jupiter's Oak (*robor Iobis* according to Willibald) at Geismar.

[141] 'Gregorius, servus servorum Dei, reverentissimo fratri et coepiscopo Bonifacio apostolicam benedictionem. Benedictus Deus et pater domini nostri Jhesu Christi, qui secundum magnam misericordiam suam et per predicationem tuam Saxoniam regeneravit in spem vivam et principes eius, Eoban scilicet et Rutwic, Vuldericum, Dedda, eduxit de tenebris ignoranciae in admirabile lumen suum, ita ut nunc sint Deo populus acquisitionis, eo quod per fidem, quam a te susceperunt, agnoscant faciem eterni luminis. Epistolam a tua dilectione transmissam Denehardus presbiter presentavit, per quam pronuntiante archidiacono Stephano de titulo S[ancte] Susanne audivimus: in Saxonia operarios paucos esse verbi Dei, quodque messis multa pullulaverit. Quapropter a latere nostro Dodonem de titulo Pastoris, ut principibus memoratis in verbo Dei presit, destinamus illique curam predicationis in nostra vice committimus. Ceterum, dilectissime, arbores illas, quas incole colunt, monemus ut succidantur, sicut subvertisti arborem, que Jovis appellabatur, que ab incolis venerabatur. De sequacibus etiam Adelberti et Clementis eliminatos de ecclesia te pronuntiare volumus, quos etiam per nos et a beato Petro anathematizatos in futurum diem eterni iudicis et a congregatione iustorum scias esse seclusos, nisi resipiscant. Data pridie Kal[endas] Jul[ias] ad Sanctum Paulum': Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors III', pp. 318–19.

[142] *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*: *ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*, ed. by P. Jaffé (Berlin: Weidemann, 1851), no. 2255, p. 261, lists the letter as

only detailed analyses the letter has received have been by Honselmann in 1957, who was convinced of the letter's authenticity,[143] and Flaskamp in 1962, who was equally convinced of the opposite.[144] Wagner has recently stated that the letter ought to be accepted as genuine.[145] If Wagner is correct in following Honselmann, the letter stands as unequivocal proof that Boniface met with real (if transitory) success in his attempts to convert the Saxons. The matter is not straightforward, however, since Honselmann and Flaskamp approached their analyses of the letter from very different directions, and their arguments cannot easily be compared.

Through his close textual analysis of the letter, Honselmann, relying on his extensive knowledge of medieval papal epistolary formulas, concluded that there was nothing in its vocabulary, structure, or formulas that indicated a date of composition after the eighth century. On the contrary, in the fourteenth century, when the *Vita Walgeri* was composed, it would have been full of archaisms that only the most dedicated forger would have troubled to reconstruct.[146] Honselmann claimed that the names of the Saxon nobles were appropriate to the early medieval period, if somewhat corrupted, as one would expect through centuries of transmission.[147] The letter's brief references to Boniface's felling of Jupiter's Oak and to the heretics Aldebert and Clemens, condemned in the Roman synod of 745, may appear contrived, but could not be considered anachronistic or inappropriate.[148]

---

spurious; *Germania Pontificia IV: Provincia Maguntinensis IV; S. Bonifatius, Archidioecesis Maguntinensis, Abbatia Fuldensis*, ed. by H. Jakobs (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), p. 18, 'manifestly spurious, though of unknown author'; F. W. Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, II: *Die Geschichte der Kirche bei den Alamannen, Bayern, Thüringern, Sachsen, Friesen und Slaven* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1848), p. 400, 'clearly spurious'; Wilmans, *Die Kaiserurkunden*, p. 314, 'obvious fiction'. Neither Hauck, Tangl, Levison, Schieffer, nor Löwe considered the letter worthy of consideration in their Bonifatian studies. Rademacher, 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission', p. 182, mentioned the letter, and was inclined to regard it as genuine; Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', p. 92 n. 65, following Flaskamp, dismissed it as 'bogus'.

[143] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors'.

[144] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief'.

[145] Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, pp. 237–38.

[146] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', pp. 91–92.

[147] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', pp. 94–96.

[148] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', pp. 102–03; Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 323–24, 330–31, is highly suspicious of these allusions to Geismar and the heretics, pointing out that no other source indicates the Pope's awareness of the Geismar episode, and that Aldebert and

The most obvious abberation in the letter is the closing formula, which forgoes both the universal farewell *Deus te incolomem custodiat* of eighth-century papal letters and the normal method of dating by Roman calendar and indiction year.[149] Instead, the letter ends by giving the day and place of its composition: 'Data pridie Kal[endas] Jul[ias] ad Sanctum Paulum'. In the opinion of Honselmann, such an obvious deviation from papal literary formulas would not have been committed by a forger who was as familiar with other aspects of eighth-century scribal practice as the writer of this letter. Moreover, he argued that there was a good contextual reason for the deviation: 30 June was the feast of St Paul, the archetypal missionary and one of Boniface's models, and so it was inevitable that the Pope would be celebrating Mass in his church on this day. Gregory thus decided to write his reply praising Boniface's successful mission in Saxony on a day and at a place whose significance Boniface would have instantly recognized and appreciated.[150]

Flaskamp, meawhile, conceded that there were no stylistic features of the letter that could prove that it was a forgery, although he remarked that the greeting formula *apostolicam benedictionem* was uncommon before the eleventh century.[151] In general, his argument against the authenticity of the letter was contextual, based on the premise that 'there is not a single reason to suggest a [Saxon mission by Boniface]'.[152] This premise, as we have seen, is highly debatable, and Flaskamp's initial bias caused him to read rather too much into aspects of the letter in order to discredit it. For instance, he claimed that, according to the letter, Saxony had

---

Clemens were first alluded to in the Concilium Germanicum of 742 (Tangl, ep. 56, p. 99, ll. 20–23) and not brought to the attention of Zacharias until 744 (Tangl, ep. 57, p. 104, l. 13 to p. 105, l. 10). However, the two heretics had clearly been active for some time before 742, and Boniface may have informed Gregory III of their activities before his death. J. B. Russell, 'Saint Boniface and the Eccentrics', *Church History*, 33. 3 (1964), 235–47 (p. 245), accepts Gregory's comment in the Herford letter as the earliest authentic reference to Aldebert and Clemens. On Aldebert and Clemens, see also N. Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: Die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter: Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion*, ed. by M. T. Fögen, Ius Commune Sonderheft (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995), pp. 217–63.

[149] Of the thirteen letters from popes to Boniface in Tangl's edition, only one, the original mission mandate from Gregory II, fails to include the *Deus te incolomem custodiat* formula, instead using the simple departure *bene vale*. Tangl, ep. 12, p. 18, l. 10.

[150] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', p. 104.

[151] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 321–22.

[152] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', p. 320.

been entirely converted and Boniface was intending to erect one bishopric for each named Saxon noble.[153] Nothing in the letter supports such a reading. Similarly, his claim that the Dodo of the letter had been invested with a degree of papal authority anachronistic for the eighth century cannot be substantiated, since the letter does not describe the nature of Dodo's authority or duties in any detail.[154] It would indeed have been very fitting for an ex-pupil of Boniface to have joined his mission in Germania.

Both Honselmann and Flaskamp agreed that Wigand, a mediocre Latinist to judge from his *Vita Waltgeri*, was almost certainly not the author of a letter that so convincingly reproduces early medieval papal literary formulas.[155] As for motive, Flaskamp suggested that the purpose of the letter's inclusion in the *Vita Waltgeri* was to link the name of Herford to Boniface via St Waltger's parents,[156] but this is clearly not so; one of the converted Saxon nobles, Dedda, does share the name of Waltger's father, but since Wigand himself claims that Waltger's grandfather was converted to Christianity during the time of Charlemagne, not his father during the time of Boniface, he could not have intended for the two Deddas to be identified. Nor is Herford or any other establishment mentioned in the letter, which appears to have served no more purpose in Wigand's vita than that of a mere curiosity.[157] This does not, however, rule out the possibility that the letter was forged at a much earlier date for different reasons. In short, both Honselmann and Flaskamp agreed that there were no firm textual reasons to denounce the letter as an outright forgery. Contextually speaking, Flaskamp was hostile to the very notion of a dedicated Bonifatian mission in Saxony, while Honselmann was not. Wagner, citing Honselmann, is eager to pronounce the letter as genuine and worthy of inclusion in the corpus of Boniface's papal correspondence.

There remains the simple matter of the letter's provenance: if it is genuine, how did it come to be at Herford in the fourteenth century? There is some evidence for a connection between Herford and eighth-century Hessia via the person of Hedwig, who succeeded her aunt Addila as abbess of Herford in about 860. Hedwig was born in 810/11 into the highest ranks of Frankish-Saxon nobility,

---

[153] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', p. 328.

[154] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 331–32.

[155] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', p. 333; Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', p. 106.

[156] Flaskamp, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief', pp. 332–33.

[157] Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors', p. 106.

grandaughter on her mother's side of Duke Ekbert of Saxony (*c.* 756– *c.* 811), and she entered the religious life only after the deaths of her husband Amalung II and sons Amalung III and Bennit II.[158] Her husband was from a powerful Saxon family known to historians as the Billungers.[159] Powerful, that is, thanks to their decision to support Charlemagne in the Saxon Wars of 772–804; at the start of those wars, Amalung II's grandfather, Amalung I, along with another Saxon noble called Hiddi, had been forced to flee Saxony with their followers and seek Frankish protection in northern Hessia. These events were recorded in a pair of related charters issued by Charlemagne to the sons of Amalung I and Hiddi in 811 and 813 respectively, by which he confirmed their legal inheritance of their fathers' Hessian properties. The earlier charter, from which the wording of the later is largely derived, describes Amalung's arrival in Hessia during the 770s:

> Let it be known to all present and future faithful subjects that our loyal subject Count Bennit has informed our serenity that his father Amalung, when the rest of the Saxons and their people acted unfaithfully against us, the aforesaid Amalung, preferring to keep his faith rather than persist in infidelity with the others, forsook the place of his birth, came to us, and, while in our service, came to the place called *Wolfsanger*,[160] which at that time Franks and Saxons inhabited, hoping to stay there with his followers, but finding it not possible. Then he continued to the place called *Waldisbecchi*[161] between the Weser and Fulda, taking for himself a certain part of the forest called *Buchonia*, and leaving it to his son Bennit upon his death.[162]

---

[158] A list of ninth-century donations to Corvey records that a woman named Haduwy granted the monastery extensive properties on behalf of the souls of her husband Amalung and sons Bennid and Amalung. The same Hathuwig/Hathuwih and her son Amelung were also remembered as generous donors in the twelfth century Corvey *Liber vitae*. There is little doubt that the female donor should be equated with Abbess Hedwig of Herford. F.-J. Jakobi, 'Zur Frage der Nachkommen der heiligen Ida und der Neuorientierung des sächsischen Adels in der Karolingerzeit', in *Heilige Ida von Herzfeld, 980–1980: Festschrift zur tausendjährigen Wiederkehr ihrer Heiligsprechung*, ed. by Géza Jaśzai (Münster: Gemeinde, 1980), pp. 53–63 (p. 54).

[159] On the Billungers, see S. Krüger, *Studien zur sächsischen Grafschaftsverfassung im 9. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950), pp. 79–82; H.-W. Goetz, 'Der Herzogtum der Billunger: Ein sächsischer Sonderweg?', in *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 66 (1994), 167–97.

[160] A village 3 km north-east of central Kassel, on the west bank of the Fulda.

[161] Probably Wahlebach, a river that flows through Waldau into the Fulda directly opposite central Kassel. See *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Kaufungen in Hessen*, ed. by H. von Roques, 2 vols (Kassel: Drewfs und Schönhoven, 1900–02), I, 2 n. 1.

[162] 'Omnibus fidelibus nostris praesentibus et futuris notum sit, quia Bennit comes, fidelis noster, innotuit serenitati nostrae eo, quod pater illius Amalungus, dum ceteri Saxones pagenses

We know nothing else of the events leading up to Amalung I's and Hiddi's unwilling flight from Saxony — for this is what it seems to have been — nor, indeed, exactly where they had fled from.[163] It is clear, however, that the root cause of their exile was their refusal to join the Saxon rebels of the 770s. The older family history of Amalung I, the first historically attested member of the so-called Billungers, is unknown. Should we surrender for a moment to speculation, we might wonder whether he had inherited a pro-Frankish, pro-Christian stance from his father or grandfather, who would have been alive during Boniface's Saxon mission of 738. There is no historical evidence to bridge this gap, but here we do, at least, have a context through which a genuine letter of Boniface concerning the Saxon mission might have come to be at Herford. Amalung I's grandsons, Amalung II and Wicman, inherited the ownership of the family *Eigenkirche* at Kaufungen near Kassel, which was presumably founded before their births, that is in the early ninth century.[164] Amalung II's wife, Hedwig, as

---

illius contra nos infideliter egissent, praefatus Amalungus mallens fidem suam servare, quam cum ceteris infidelibus perseverare, relinquens locum nativitatis suae, veniens ad nos et, dum in nostro esset obsequio, venit ad villam, cuius est vocabulum Uulnisanger, quam tunc temporis Franci et Saxones habitare videbantur, cupiens ibi cum eis manere, sed minime potuit. Tunc pergens ad locum, qui dicitur Waldisbecchi, inter Wiseraa et Fuldaa proprisit sibi partem quendam de silva, quae vocatur Bocchonia, quam moriens dereliquit filio suo Bennit': *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Großen*, ed. by E. Mühlbacher, MGH, Diplomatum Karolinorum, 1 (1906), no. 213, p. 285, ll. 1–10. For the charter of 813, see ibid., no. 218, pp. 290–92. Confusingly, W. Kienast, *Die fränkische Vasallität* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1990), p. 183 n. 574, in his discussion of this material, appears to equate Amalung I and his son Bennit I from the charter of 811 with Hedwig's husband and son in the Corvey tradition, that is with Amalung II and Bennit II, but this cannot be the case; Amalung I had died by the time the charter was drawn up in 811, while Hedwig was only born in this or the preceding year. See further K. Heinemeyer, *Königshöfe und Königsgut im Raum Kassel*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 33 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), pp. 124–60.

[163] Gustav Brecht suggested Groß Orden in Sachsen-Anhalt, 122 km north-east of Kassel, as the Billungers' place of origin ('Erläuterungen zu den Kunstbeilagen', in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Quedlinburg*, ed. by K. Janicke, Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen, 2 vols (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1873–82), II, pp. xc–cv (pp. xciv–xcviii)).

[164] We do not know when the brothers were born, but Amalung II must have died before 860 when Hedwig became abbess of Herford, and Wicman was killed fighting the Danes in 880 according to the *Annals of Fulda* (*Ann. Fuld.*, p. 393; see Krüger, *Studien zur sächsischen Grafschaftsverfassung*, p. 82). The document involving the family church at Kaufungen is a royal confirmation dating from *c.* 850 at Witzenhausen, *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Kaufungen*, ed. by Roques, no. 2, I, 3, ll. 22–28: 'Notibus sit omnibus tam praesentibus quam futuris, qualiter sub domno Hludovico rege factum est placitum in pago, qui dicitur Hassim, in villa Wizzanhuson

mentioned, became abbess of Herford after his death. It is possible that such an article as the Herford letter, especially if the named Saxon *principes* were claimed by the Billungers as their ancestors,[165] came to the attention of clerics at the family church of Kaufungen during the renewed evangelization of Saxony under Charlemagne, and passed from there to Herford during Hedwig's abbacy, where it survived as a curiosity until the fourteenth century.

This is, of course, a circumstantial argument, and it does not prove the authenticity of the letter itself, which must be judged on its own merits. But it does provide a plausible series of connections between, first, Boniface's Saxon mission of 738; second, a letter written by Pope Gregory III in 740 or 741 concerning the mission that could easily have been preserved at Fulda, Fritzlar, or Hersfeld for several decades; third, the exile of the Saxon noble Amalung I in Hessia from the 770s, at the renewal of the Saxon mission; fourth, the foundation of a monastery at Kaufungen by him or his son, which was inherited by his grandson; and finally the abbacy of his grandson's wife at Herford. This peculiar set of historical contingencies also helps explain why a single letter concerning the evangelization of the Saxons, of all things, should have found its way to Herford, of all places, when it was not preserved at Mainz; indeed, had Wigand not happened upon it in the fourteenth century and thought it pertinent to his work, it would undoubtedly have joined the countless other letters of Boniface which have been lost to history.

Should the letter, then, be accepted as authentic? It seems to me that there are three main considerations: the form of the letter, its provenance, and the context

---

cum filio Bennuth nuncupato Amalung comite et fratre suo Wicman de ecclesia in Kapungun. Et dixit Meginfridus advocatus, quot dicti fratres et comites in rebus ecclesiae illius a progenitoribus essent juste et rationabiliter potentes' (Let it be known to all, present as well as future, that under the Lord King Louis [the German, † 876] a decree has been made in the *pagus* called *Hessia*, in the *villa* of Witzenhausen, with the son of Bennit, called Count Amalung, and his brother Wicman, concerning the church of Kaufungen. And the advocate Meginfrid states that the said brothers and counts justly and reasonably inherit from their ancestors authority over all matters concerning their church).

[165] There is no direct evidence that suggests any familial relationship between Amalung I and the converted Saxon *principes* Eoban, Rutwic, Wuldericus, and Dedda named in Wigand's letter. As far as names are concerned, Amalung I's son Rudrat shared the first element of his name with Rutwic, who would have been of his grandfather's or great-grandfather's generation. See Krüger, *Studien zur sächsischen Grafschaftsverfassung*, p. 79. Hiddi, who arrived in Hessia with his own followers alongside Amalung I and may well have been related to him, had a son with the name Asig/Adalricus ('Asig, qui et Adalricus vocatur', *Die Urkunden*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 218, p. 291, l. 27), sharing a second element with Wuldericus.

in which it was purportedly written. As far as form is concerned, it would be useful if another expert in medieval papal literary formulas undertook a critical assessment of Honselmann's arguments. At the moment it cannot be condemned on these grounds; its minor divergencies appear not to be inexplicable, whether through context or corrupted transmission, and its overall structure — a general comment on Boniface's progress laden with biblical allusions, followed by a number of disjointed instructions on specific issues — follows that of genuine papal letters.[166] Second, while its provenance remains a mystery, the early connections between Hessia and Herford mean that very fact of the letter's existence cannot be used to condemn it.

Finally, the passages concerning the Saxon mission include incidental material, in particular the naming of Denehard and Dodo, that fit precisely with the period and circumstances of its purported origin. Should the letter be a later forgery, it is possible that the allusion to the Geismar shrine was derived from the famous 'Oak of Jupiter' incident in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*; on the other hand, Gregory refers to it as 'the tree which was said to be Jupiter's' rather than simply 'the Oak of Jupiter', a minor but significant difference with regard to textual borrowing. We should note that the only other mention of Jupiter-worship in the letters was also made by Gregory, when he referred in a letter of 732 to priests who had sacrificed to the god.[167] A further allusion to Jupiter in 740/41 would hardly be surprising.

In summary, the letter as a whole is unusual and its provenance uncertain, but it is so accurate and convincing in certain regards that, while the burden of proof remains on those who regard it as genuine, it becomes just as difficult to explain it as a forgery. At present I am willing to accept its authenticity and regard it as firm evidence that Boniface, following in the wake of Charles Martel's campaign, made significant progress in Saxony between 738 and 741. There is no need to presume that the mission now stretched very far into Saxony, but a significant portion of the borderlands, perhaps as far as the middle Weser, had clearly been annexed. Boniface baptized at least four Saxon nobles who had submitted, voluntarily or not, to Frankish overlordship, but found that the sheer number of converts quickly strained his manpower and resources; hence his appeal to Rome for assistance.

---

[166] See, for example, Gregory III's letters of *c.* 732 and 739: Tangl, ep. 28, pp. 49–52; ep. 45, pp. 71–74.

[167] 'Nam et eos, qui se dubitant fuisse baptizatos a non vel qui a presbitero Iovi mactanti et immolaticias carnes vescenti, ut baptizentur, precipimus': Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 5–7.

## *The Foundation and Demotion of the Bishopric of Büraburg*

### The Foundation of the Bishopric of Büraburg in 741

Apart from Fritzlar, the other major institution founded by Boniface in Hessia was the bishopric of Büraburg, established in 741 in order to consolidate Boniface's existing mission territory and to aid in the expansion of the mission into Saxony.[168] In 746 or early in 747, Büraburg was demoted to the status of chorepiscopate or archdiaconate within the newly established diocese of Mainz. Since the fate of the short-lived diocese of Büraburg must be related to the condition of Boniface's mission in Hessia and the Saxon borderlands in the 740s, it will be necessary to examine the chronological and historical issues involved, which are by no means clear-cut.

First of all, three directly contemporary letters refer to the foundation of the bishopric of Büraburg. The first is an undated letter from Boniface to Pope Zacharias in which Boniface greeted the new pope (consecrated 3 or 10 December 741) and informed him that he had established three episcopal seats at Büraburg, Würzburg (90 km south of Fulda) and Erfurt in Thuringia.[169] The second letter is Zacharias's reply, dated 1 April 743.[170] The date of Zacharias's consecration and his reply place the writing of Boniface's letter some time in 742, but whether early or late we cannot say: either Boniface was slow to greet the new pope, or Zacharias was slow to respond. Finally there is a letter from Zacharias to Witta (*Uuittanus*) by which he confirmed the Anglo-Saxon as bishop of Büraburg.[171] Witta also appears as *Uuintanus* among the bishops who attended the Concilium Germanicum summoned by Duke Carloman in 742,[172] and as *Huuita* among those from

---

[168] Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, pp. 36–37.

[169] 'Unam esse sedem episcopatus decrevimus in castello, quod dicitur Uuirzaburg; et alteram in oppido, quod nominatur Buraburg; tertiam in loco, qui dicitur Erphesfurt, qui fuit iam olim urbs paganorum rusticorum': Tangl, ep. 50, p. 81, ll. 20–24.

[170] Tangl, ep. 51, pp. 86–92.

[171] Tangl, ep. 52, pp. 92–94.

[172] Tangl, ep. 56, p. 99, l. 6. The dating of the Concilium Germanicum, the first of the church councils which were Boniface's major weapons in his attempted reforms of the Frankish church, has been extensively discussed by German scholars. I have followed the general consensus for 742, although 743 has also been mooted by some, notably Schieffer and Jäschke, and was accepted by Wand. See A. Angenendt, 'Concilium Germanicum', in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. by W. Kasper, 3rd edn, 3 vols (Freiberg i.Br.: Herder, 1993–2001), II (1996), 1289–90; K. Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation',

whom Boniface's 746/47 letter to Æthelbald of Mercia was addressed,[173] but he was not listed attending the Frankish church council of 747. He makes a brief appearance as *Wizo* in Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi* (written 754x68) at the consecration of Willibald of Eichstätt on 21 October 741,[174] but vanishes along with his see thereafter.[175]

These few references represent the only contemporary evidence for the existence of the bishop and see of Büraburg. Willibald did not mention either Büraburg or Erfurt in his *Vita Bonifatii*, but rather implied that Boniface only ever intended to found bishoprics at Würzburg and Eichstätt, and that he did so at the same time.[176] This clearly contradicts the evidence of the directly contemporary papal letters, which make no mention of Eichstätt.[177] Since Willibald was writing

---

*HJL*, 30 (1980), 1–45 (p. 22); J. Jarnut, 'Bonifatius und die fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743–748)', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, 109, Kanonistische Abteilung, 66 (1979), 1–26; K.-U. Jäschke, 'Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum', in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, ed. by H. Beumann, 2 vols (Cologne: Böhlau, 1973–74), II, 71–136; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 207–08; Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 52.

[173] Tangl, ep. 72, p. 147, l. 1.

[174] *Vita Willibaldi*, chap. 5, p. 105, l. 6.

[175] For a discussion of Witta and his fate after 746/47, see Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar*, pp. 52–55.

[176] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 8, p. 44, ll. 6–17.

[177] The date of Eichstätt's foundation as a bishopric is uncertain, for no contemporary reference survives. Although it clearly post-dates Boniface's foundations of Würzburg, Büraburg, and Erfurt, it cannot be much later, for Willibald, the first bishop of Eichstätt, was consecrated in 741. It is possible that Willibald was originally consecrated bishop of Erfurt and transferred to Eichstätt by 745 at the latest, but this is disputed. Hauck argued that the first bishop of Erfurt was Adalar (Æthelhere), who was martyred with Boniface at Dokkum and who may be the Dadanus recorded among the bishops attending the Concilium Germanicum in 742/43: Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, p. 521 n. 1. Tangl concurred with Hauck's judgement, while Levison and Schieffer considered it a possibility: M. Tangl, 'Das Bistum Erfurt', in *Geschichtliche Studien: Festschrift für Albert Hauck zum 70. Geburtstage*, ed. by S. Jenks (Leipzig: Freytag, 1916), pp. 108–20; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 80; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 200–01. Flaskamp, meanwhile, argued that Willibald was originally ordained Bishop of Erfurt in 741 (according to Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*, chap. 5, p. 105, ll. 5–11, he was consecrated at Sülzenbrücken, 15 km south-west of Erfurt) but that his seat was moved to Eichstätt by 745. Wand and, most recently, Heinemeyer have leaned towards Flaskamp's theory. F. Flaskamp, 'Das Bistum Erfurt: Ein Beitrag zur thüringisch-sächsischen Kirchengeschichte', *Zeitschrift für vaterländische Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens*, 83 (1925), 1–26; Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 48; K. Heinemeyer, 'Bonifatius: Mönch und Reformer', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 73–76. The issues involved are too wide ranging to expand upon here; for the latest comprehensive

only twenty years or so after the abortive foundation of the bishoprics of Büra-
burg and Erfurt, it can hardly be the case that the true course of events had
been forgotten, or that he for some reason remained ignorant of them. Rather,
he (or his patron Lul) portrayed events as though the unintended outcome of
Boniface's episcopal organization of Germania — two bishoprics in Würzburg
and Eichstätt, far from the Saxon borderlands — had been the plan all along.[178]

There are two chronological matters for consideration here: first, the year in
which the bishopric of Büraburg was founded; second, the year in which it was
demoted. The issue of the physical extent of the diocese of Büraburg will be
discussed in Chapter 7, below.[179] The first matter for our consideration, upon
which much more ink has been spilled, is the question of whether Büraburg,
Würzburg, and Erfurt were established as bishoprics in 741 or 742. The reply of
Zacharias to Boniface's report on 1 April 743 gives a clear *terminus ante quem* of
mid- to late 742 for the foundation of the three bishoprics. Hygeburg's *Vita
Willibaldi* gives the date of Willibald of Eichstätt's consecration as 22 October
741.[180] Since Witta of Büraburg was one of the presiding bishops (along with
Boniface and Burchard of Würzburg) at the event, he himself must have been
consecrated before this date, if not long before.

The problem that many scholars have had with this chronology is that Boni-
face must have established his bishoprics during the lifetime of Charles Martel
(† October 741), who some historians believe attempted to obstruct Boniface's
efforts to reform the Frankish church.[181] Yet if the date of Boniface's episcopal
foundations is shifted to autumn of 742 and the rule of Charles's supposedly more
supportive son Carloman, two chronological conflicts are created: first, with the
likely date of Willibald of Eichstätt's consecration in 741; second, with the widely
accepted date of the Concilium Germanicum of 21 April 742, which Witta,

---

discussion, see A. Wendehorst, *Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz: Das Bistum Eichstätt*,
I: *Die Bischofsreihe bis 1535*, Germania Sacra, NF, 45 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), especially
pp. 19–31.

[178] W. Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen in die Mainzer
Diözese', *HJL*, 4 (1954), 37–63 (pp. 56–59).

[179] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 331–41.

[180] *Vita Willibaldi*, chap. 5, p. 105, ll. 5–11.

[181] The debate is closely related to the dating of the Concilium Germanicum; see in particular
Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 197; also Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr', p. 23. I am
sceptical of the degree to which Charles Martel was an active antagonist of Boniface, especially in
the matter of his bishoprics; see Chapter 7, below, pp. 349–56.

Burchard, and Willibald attended as bishops. Dating the origin of the bishoprics to late in 742 would also mean that Boniface had waited almost a year to greet the newly installed Pope Zacharias, which would have been uncharacteristically neglectful on his part.[182] Reuter has observed that we simply know too little about Charles Martel's relationship with Boniface either to rule out or to promote the idea that Boniface could have founded bishoprics in Germania during his reign,[183] and in light of the chronological issues a date of 741 for the establishment of the bishopric of Büraburg is now generally acknowledged as preferable.[184]

## The Incorporation of Büraburg into the Diocese of Mainz *c.* 746

The debate over the year in which the bishopric of Büraburg was founded diminishes somewhat in importance against the second matter for our consideration, which is the fact that the latest evidence for its existence is the final appearance of Witta's name in Boniface's letter to King Æthelbald of 746/47.[185] The apparent demotion of Büraburg from episcopal status in 746, only five years after its establishment, suggests that circumstances in Hessia had changed significantly within this time period. It is unlikely that Boniface's foundation of bishoprics at Büraburg and Erfurt had simply been 'too rash', as Wallace-Hadrill supposed, and that his seeking of papal confirmation was a reluctant attempt to secure them.[186] On the contrary, Gregory III had instructed him to consider annointing bishops as early as 732, yet Boniface had waited almost ten years before doing so,[187] while he had consistently sought papal approval at every stage of his carefully organized mission. We should instead consider the matter by asking two questions: first,

---

[182] For further discussion of the issues, see F. Staab, 'Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der fränkischen und päpstlichen Politik', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 40 (1988), 13–41; H. Michels, 'Das Gründungsjahr der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 39 (1987), 11–42; Jäschke, 'Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer'; A. Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 247–87 (especially pp. 271–73); Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen'.

[183] Reuter, 'Saint Boniface', p. 92 n. 73.

[184] Heinemeyer, 'Bonifatius', p. 72.

[185] Tangl, ep. 73, p. 147, l. 1.

[186] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 155–56.

[187] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 3–10.

who assumed responsibility for Hessia and Thuringia after their bishoprics were demoted; second, what had changed on the frontier between 741 and 746 that might have prompted their demotion in the first place.

As to the first question, it seems that Boniface apparently took personal responsibility for his northern mission territory in Hessia and Thuringia after the demotion of the bishoprics. In 752, he, not a subordinate, was directing the reconstruction of churches after a devastating Saxon invasion the previous year.[188] In his roughly contemporary letter to Abbot Fulrad of St Denis he also claimed that the missionaries on the Saxon borderlands survived only with his support;[189] moreover, he stated quite clearly in the same letter that the region of direct responsibility that he hoped to transfer from himself to Lul, that is, the diocese of Mainz, extended as far as the borderlands with the pagans (*marca paganorum*), hence must have included Hessia.[190] The theory that Boniface demoted the bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt in order to supervise their respective territories from his episcopal seat in Mainz, which he assumed in 746, gains some support from a problematic passage in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, written 754x68 (the sentence to be discussed is in italics):

> Et duos bonae industriae viros ad ordinem episcopatus promovit, Willibaldum et Burchhardum, eisque in intimis orientalium Franchorum partibus et Baguariorum terminis êcclesias sibi commissas inpertiendo distribuit. Et Willibaldo suae gubernationis parrochiam commendavit in loco, cuius vocabulum est Haegsted, Burchhardo vero in loco qui appellatur Wirzaburch dignitatis officium delegavit *et ecclesias in confinibus Franchorum et Saxonum atque Sclavorum suo officio deputavit* et usque ad gloriosum exitus sui diem incessanter arctam regni caelestis viam plebibus patefecit.[191]

This is Willibald's account of Boniface's delegation of responsibility to Bishops Willibald of Eichstätt and Burchard of Würzburg in Chapter 8 of the *Vita Bonifatii*. Levison's punctuation in the MGH edition of the vita, as seen here, tends to lead readers towards the interpretation reached by Talbot in his English translation (the same sentence is italicized):

> He promoted two men of good repute to the episcopate, Willibald and Burchard, dividing between them the churches which were under his jurisdiction in east France and on the frontiers of Bavaria. To Willibald he entrusted the diocese of Eichstatt, to Burchard that of Wurzburgh, *putting under his care all the churches within the borders of*

---

[188] Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 15–21.

[189] Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, ll. 15–20.

[190] Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, l. 19.

[191] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 8, p. 44, ll. 6–17.

*the Franks, Saxons and Slavs*. Nevertheless, even to the day of his death he did not fail to instruct the people in the way of life.[192]

Fritze disputed this interpretation, arguing on stylistic grounds that the italicized sentence would be better preceded by a full stop in the Latin, and that the personal pronoun in *suo officio deputavit* should be read in the classical sense as being reflexive, that is, referring to Boniface, not to Burchard.[193] Fritze also disagreed with Tangl's reading of *in confinibus Franchorum et Saxonum atque Sclavorum* to mean 'within the borderlands of the Franks, Saxons and Slavs'.[194] Again for stylistic reasons, he proposed an alternative translation of 'within the Frankish territory bordering the Saxons on the one hand, and the Slavs on the other', that is, within the former dioceses of Büraburg and Erfurt.[195]

Fritze's proposed interpretation would thus read in English: '[Boniface] alloted the churches within the Frankish territory bordering the Saxons and the Slavs to his own authority.' The benefit of this reading is clear when one observes that Talbot was forced to invent an awkward 'nevertheless' in order for the final sentence to make good sense: 'and to the day of his death [Boniface] did not fail to instruct the people in the way of life'. In other words, Boniface assigned Willibald the diocese of Eichstätt, Burchard the diocese of Würzburg, and incorporated the short-lived dioceses of Büraburg and Erfurt into his own see of Mainz. The evidence of the letters supports this interpretation, for if Boniface had assigned the northern mission field to Burchard of Würzburg, we would have difficulty explaining why Boniface, not Burchard, was responsible for it in 752. Willibald's grammar is admittedly ambiguous, but this can hardly have been deliberate on his part; more probably, he assumed that his audience would already know the true course of fairly recent events, and would not be confused as to the referent of *suo officio deputavit*.

The importance of Fritze's conclusion, which has since won general acceptance among German scholars,[196] is that it tells us something fundamental about Boniface's attitude towards his mission field in Hessia. Through his institutional

---

[192] Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, p. 53.

[193] Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen', pp. 46–50.

[194] '[I]n den Grenzgebieten der Franken, Sachsen und Slawen': Willibald of Mainz, *Leben des heiligen Bonifazius*, in *Die Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit*, ed. and trans. by M. Tangl, 3rd edn, 90 vols (Leipzig: Dyk, 1884–1928), XIII (1920), 1–144 (p. 42).

[195] Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen', pp. 39–44.

[196] For example, Schwind, 'Fritzlar zur Zeit des Bonifatius', pp. 81–82; Heinemeyer, 'Bonifatius', p. 78; Heinemeyer, 'Die Missionierung Hessens', p. 53; Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 54.

arrangements Boniface was able to delegate authority over Frankish and Bavarian regions to his followers, yet he ultimately chose to keep the missionary districts of Hessia and Thuringia under his direct control even at such a very late stage in his life. The precise status of the former bishopric of Büraburg after its demotion and the fate of Bishop Witta are not entirely clear, as Wand has discussed.[197] Lupus's *Vita Wigberti* (written 836) mentions that a certain Albuinus, *presul* of Büraburg, translated the remains of St Wigbert from Büraburg to Lul's new monastery at Hersfeld after 772, and died in Mainz in 786, the same year as Lul.[198] Lupus's term *presul* implies that Albuinus — probably not, despite the suggestion of Pertz, the Latinized name of Witta[199] — occupied a position of special responsibility at Büraburg, and was possibly an assistant bishop (*chorepiscopus*) to Lul.[200] Further-more, Charlemagne's 775 charter of royal patronage for Hersfeld protected the monastery from the interference of any 'archdeacon or agent of the bishops of Mainz, Austria or Thuringia.'[201] Since Mainz and Thuringia are mentioned in this clause, Austria here most probably refers to the region of Hessia,[202] and to the archdeacon (in effect an assistant bishop)[203] whose seat was moved from Büraburg

[197] Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 55.

[198] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 24, p. 42, ll. 45–48.

[199] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 24, p. 42 n. 5. Wunder disproved the identifica-tion: H. Wunder, 'Die Wigberttradition in Hersfeld und Fritzlar' (unpublished doctoral disserta-tion, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1969), pp. 89–97.

[200] Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 53.

[201] '[A]rchidiaconus aut missus episcoporum Mogonciae, Austriae, Toringiae': *Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld*, ed. by Weirich, nos 5–6, p. 12, ll. 13–15.

[202] Wunder, *Die Wigberttradition*, pp. 99–100. The term *regnum Austrasiorum* also appears in a charter of 782, in which Charlemagne granted several churches in central Hessia to Fritzlar. Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', pp. 98–99, suggests that these two occurrences represent an attempt by Charlemagne to reorganize the administration of the Hessian region in the context of his Saxon wars, but that the term *Austria/Austrasia* ultimately failed to supplant the term *Hessia*.

[203] Archdeacons first arose in the fourth century as holders of primarily liturgical responsi-bilities within particular orders, but by the eighth century the office of an archdeacon was typically to act as the 'bishop's vicar' and support him in an administrative capacity. In Boniface's time, archdeacons were an entirely Continental, largely Roman phenomenon; there is no archdeacon recorded in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until the early ninth century. See A. Amanieu, 'Archi-diacre', in *Dictionnaire du droit canonique*, ed. by R. Naz, 7 vols (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1924–65), I (1935), cols 948–1004, especially cols 959–60; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 107; R. E. Reynolds, *The Ordinals of Christ from their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), pp. 28–52.

to Fritzlar some time before the eleventh century.[204] The post of an archdeacon or assistant bishop at Büraburg/Fritzlar therefore dates at least from Lul's episcopate (754–86). That Boniface designated Lul his *chorepiscopus* is well known,[205] and in doing so he was following the custom of Willibrord in Frisia, who had once tried to assign Boniface himself to such a post.[206] It is therefore possible that the assistant bishop or archdeacon at Büraburg was originally established by Boniface after 746 in order to assist him in the administration of the Hessian church.

Our second question concerned the cause of the demotion of the bishopric in 746. If, as seems possible, one reason for the foundation of the bishopric of Büraburg in 741 had been the rapid expansion of Boniface's mission field into southern Saxony, one reason for its demotion five years later may have been the dramatic failure of that expansion. In 743, as already discussed, Pippin led a campaign against the eastern Saxons; in 745, a Saxon retaliatory attack devastated part of Boniface's mission field.[207] Boniface's report to the Pope, which does not survive, prompted Zacharias in his reply to compare the Saxon attack to past sackings of Rome.[208] Although this may have been a general allusion by Zacharias, it could also indicate that the attack of 745 had been directed not at a large number of isolated churches, as the attacks of 752 would be, but at one or more of the principal ecclesiastical sites in Hessia or Thuringia. In 774, according to Lupus's *Vita Wigberti*, a Saxon raiding party attempted to burn Fritzlar and besiege Büraburg,[209] and it is possible that hostile Saxons had targeted the same or another district twenty-nine years earlier in much the same way.

Whether or not Büraburg and Fritzlar were directly affected by the Saxon invasion of 745, the damage done to Boniface's mission infrastructure must have been severe. This, together with the impossibility of sustaining any expansion into increasingly hostile pagan districts, was probably a major factor in the sudden

---

[204] For a full discussion, see Chapter 7, pp. 331–41, below.

[205] '[F]iliolum meum et corepiscopum Lullum': Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, ll. 21–22.

[206] See Boniface's letter to Pope Stephen regarding Willibrord's legacy in Utrecht: 'Et sibi [Willibrordus] corepiscopum ad ministerium implendum substituit' (Tangl, ep. 109, p. 235, l. 14–15). Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, pp. 20–21.

[207] See this above, pp. 211–16.

[208] 'De incursione autem gentium, quae in tuis plebibus facta est, merendum nobis est. Sed haec adversitatis nullatenus tuam fraternitatem conturbet. Quia et Roma civitas ex accidentitibus facinoribus sepius est depopulata, et tamen omnipotentia sua Dominus ex supernis eam dignatus est consolare': Tangl, ep. 60, p. 121, ll. 4–8.

[209] Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, chap. 13, p. 41, l. 28, to chap. 22, p. 42, l. 36.

demotion of Erfurt and Büraburg from the status of bishoprics a year or so later. By 746 Boniface had also attained an episcopal see in Mainz, which enabled him to supervise his missionaries on the borderlands from a relatively secure distance as well as to provide them with material support, perhaps in the hope that conditions would improve and the mission could continue. The devastating 752 uprising in western Saxony, however, belied this hope.

## *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have attempted to present a critical chronology of Boniface's Hessian mission between 721 and 754 with a clear and deep awareness of the precise context in which he worked. Boniface enjoyed early and rapid success in central Hessia, founded a permanent missionary base at Fritzlar, and his intention appears to have been to consolidate the region in order to realize his ultimate ambition of converting the Saxons. Prompted by Charles Martel's invasion of Saxony in 738, Boniface expanded his mission north of the Diemel. Despite initial advances and the optimistic foundation of frontier bishoprics at Büraburg and Erfurt in 741, the extent of Saxon hostility soon became apparent. Pagan raiding parties attacked the missionaries, burned their churches, and by 747 the worsening situation in the borderlands had led Boniface to demote his two northern bishoprics. His mission suffered a further setback in 752 with the loss of dozens of churches, and by 772 the pagan Saxons had reclaimed territory as far south as Eresburg.

Although hindsight might thus permit us to label Boniface's Saxon mission a failure, there is no reason to suppose that he ever considered it such, much less that he lost all hope of ever reinvigorating it. His continuing attempts throughout the 740s to obtain a metropolitan seat at Cologne, vital for the coordination of a full-scale mission in Saxony, must be seen in this context. Wallace-Hadrill expressed puzzlement that Boniface had always longed for a permanent seat in Cologne rather than in Mainz, when Mainz was much better situated for pushing forward the reforms of the Rhineland Frankish church.[210] But this puzzlement arose from the assumption that Boniface had effectively abandoned any hope of converting the Saxons in his lifetime, as though he could foresee the many decades of bitter warfare that would pass before Charles Martel's grandson would finally bring them to heel.

---

[210] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 157–58.

On the contrary, in 751 Boniface was still seeking papal support for his claims on Cologne,[211] and he had never weakened his support for his small bands of missionaries who lived under constant threat of pagan annexation. When invaders burned his foundations in the Hessian-Saxon borderlands in 752, the embers could hardly have been cool before Boniface set about personally directing the reconstruction of church buildings. This is not to say that the reform of the wider Frankish church was not also a central concern of Boniface; indeed, as we shall see, it was intrinsically related to his desire to evangelize Saxony, for without fundamental reforms of corrupt Frankish clergy there would be no stable Rhineland church from which to project the mission. Yet even during the final years of his life and in the face of opposition that ultimately proved insurmountable, the impetus of Boniface's mission was always north, towards the pagan Saxon frontier. We must bear this in mind when in the next two chapters we consider the symbolic representation of the mission in the letters of Boniface and Lul and the ways in which the missionaries attempted to overcome the obstacles they encountered.

---

[211] Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 14–20.

# Representing the Mission

We have so far investigated the West Saxon context from which Boniface came, the Hessian context into which he arrived, and have constructed, as far as the sources permit, a chronology of the Hessian mission itself. The aim of this chapter is to examine the ways in which Boniface and his correspondents, particularly his Anglo-Saxon contacts, represented the mission in Germania through their literary discourse. This will allow us, first, to understand the contrast between the Anglo-Saxon and papal views of the mission, and to determine the significance of this contrast. Second, it will add a useful dimension to our study in Chapter 7 of the practical challenges faced by the missionaries in the field itself. As I argued in Chapter 2, contrasting the experiences of the missionary community with its symbolic representation of those experiences will help us understand both.

Several recent literary studies have refocused attention on the letters of Boniface and Lul as an important resource for understanding the social relationships of the missionary community,[1] the status and learning of female religious connected to Boniface,[2] the use of formulaic lamentation in Anglo-Saxon correspondence,[3] and the literary influences and habits of the

---

[1] Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*.

[2] J. Cünnen, *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten: Angelsächsische Frauenbriefe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2000); P. Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 30–35; C. E. Fell, 'Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by H. Damico and A. H. Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 29–43.

[3] Schaefer, 'Two Women in Need of a Friend'; S. Horner, 'En/closed Subjects: *The Wife's Lament* and the Culture of Early Medieval Female Monasticism', in *Old English Literature:*

missionaries.[4] So far nobody has studied what is one of the defining features of the letters: their representation of mission through a complex interplay of biblical and patristic themes, motifs, and metaphors. In order to elucidate this feature of the letters I have subjected them to careful textual analysis from a number of perspectives, the results of which are tabulated in Appendices 1–3. Since there was no direct equivalent to the modern term *mission* in the eighth century, first we shall clarify the words used by the missionaries and their contacts, in Rome and Britain, to refer to the mission in the broad sense. We shall see that the mission was most often characterized as *predicatio* and *ministerium* between all contacts, but that representation of the mission as *peregrinatio* was a motif employed only between Anglo-Saxons.

Next we shall examine the various metaphors and motifs employed by the missionaries in their symbolic representation of the mission, which included the contrast of paganism as captivity/darkness/ignorance with Christianity as freedom/light/wisdom, the metaphor of mission as harvest, and the symbolic language of suffering. The last of these, like *peregrinatio*, was used only in letters between Anglo-Saxons. Finally, we shall draw together the three distinctive but interwoven strands of the discourse between the missionaries and their Anglo-Saxon supporters that formed their dominant representation of the mission: exile, suffering, and Germania as a symbolic land of primeval darkness. This conceptualization of mission was fundamental to the identity of Boniface and his followers. It defined how they viewed themselves and the world at large, it helped them rationalize the setbacks and failures they suffered, and from it they drew the strength to continue. Early medieval historical sources very rarely grant us the opportunity to examine so closely the complex, dynamic identity of a community such as this.

## Terms and Expressions Relating to Mission and Missionaries

### The Terminology of the Letters of Boniface and Lul

Early medieval Latin had no direct equivalents for the modern English words 'mission' and 'missionaries', which derive from terms coined by sixteenth-century

---

*Critical Essays*, ed. by R. M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 381–91 (pp. 384–85).

[4] Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources'; R. McKitterick, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences*, Eighth Annual Brixworth Lecture, Vaughan Papers, 36 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990) (repr. as R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995)). See also Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe', pp. 731–90.

Spanish Jesuit missionaries in Latin America.[5] Boniface was occasionally described as having been *missus*, 'sent', by Rome to preach to and convert the peoples of Germania,[6] but the term *missio*, in the specific modern sense of the coordinated Christianization and conversion of a given population, was never used by contemporaries.

How, then, did Boniface and his correspondents refer to what we persistently and rather anachronistically call his 'mission', and what does this tell us about their perception of his activities? In Appendix 1. 1, I have listed the terms and expressions used in the letters of Boniface and Lul which relate to the purpose and method of Boniface's mission and missionary activities, including preaching, converting, and general pastoral care of newly converted populations. I have not included terms or expressions that clearly referred only to Boniface's attempts to reform the Frankish church, which is not to say that his evangelization, pastoral arrangements, monastic organization, and wider institutional reforms were not all occasionally implied in a single term such as *opus*. Nor have I included a handful of instances of the term *baptizare* (to baptize), which in the letters is always used to refer to specific occasions, not to general missionary methods or aims (in contrast to *convertere*).

As is clear in Appendix 1, sections 1 and 2, the term most frequently used to describe the activities of missionaries was *predicatio* (along with the related words *predicare* and *predicator*, 36 occurrences in the corpus); followed by *ministerium* (or *minister*, 19 occurrences); *peregrinatio* (or *peregrinus* or *peregrinari*, 19 occurrences); *labor* (16 occurrences), and *opus* (14 occurrences). Less frequently used terms relating to mission were *convertere*, *dicere* (in this context meaning 'to preach'), *dispensatio* (or *dispensator*), *docere*, *exhortatio*, *inluminatio*, *iter*, *legatio*, *mandatum*, *negotium*, and *ritus*.

## Mission as *Predicatio* and *Ministerium*

The definitive activity of Boniface's early mission in the eyes of the Papacy was his preaching, *predicatio*. According to Gregory II, Boniface's task was to preach the

---

[5] D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, 16 (New York: Orbis, 1991), p. 1.

[6] See, for example, the Papacy's description of Boniface's mandate: 'fidelis minister [...] quem misi ad vos' (Tangl, ep. 21, p. 36, ll. 21–22); 'ministerio, pro quo missus es' (Tangl, ep. 26, p. 44, ll. 16–17); 'in illis partibus missus [...] praedicare verbum Dei' (Tangl, ep. 42, p. 67, ll. 13–14).

'correct faith'[7] and the 'Word of salvation'[8] according to the Great Commission given by Christ at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, which has formed the theological basis and justification for all Christian missions until the modern age: 'Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'.[9] When Gregory II recommended Boniface to Charles Martel, he said that he had been sent 'to preach to the common people of Germania'.[10] Gregory III reiterated that Boniface's original mandate had been 'to preach the Word of God',[11] and Zacharias in turn described his activities as 'preaching the Gospel of Christ'.[12]

The biblical theme of *predicatio*, chiefly formulated in the Gospel of Matthew, permeates much of the New Testament,[13] and for our purposes is more accurately translated into English as 'missionary preaching' or 'evangelizing' than merely

---

[7] '[A]d predicandum recta fides': Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, ll. 13–14.

[8] '[P]redicando verbum salutis': Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, l. 16.

[9] '[E]untes ergo docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti': Matthew 28. 19. Gregory II invokes this passage in Tangl, ep. 25, p. 43, ll. 15–17. See also L. E. von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 51 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2003), p. 425.

[10] '[A]d predicandum plebibus Germaniae gentis': Tangl, ep. 20, p. 34, l. 9.

[11] '[P]raedicare verbum Dei': Tangl, ep. 42, p. 67, ll. 13–14.

[12] '[P]redicatio evangelii Christi': Tangl, ep. 80, p. 172, ll. 21–22.

[13] Matthew's Gospel is fundamentally missionary, and many of the later books of the New Testament, in particular the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, essentially describe the attempts of the disciples to fulfil the Great Commission with which Matthew ended his narrative. There is a large literature on the nature and development of missionary theology in the New Testament; see in particular M. F. Bird, *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007); J. LaGrand, *The Earliest Christian Mission to the Nations in the Light of Matthew's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); D. J. Bosch, 'Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission', in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, ed. by J. M. Phillips and R. T. Coote (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 175–92; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, pp. 15–83; M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), especially pp. 133–56; D. Senior and C. Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (London: SCM, 1983), especially pp. 211–32; S. Brown, 'The Matthean Community and the Gentile Mission', *Novum Testamentum*, 22 (1980), 193–221; P. T. O'Brien, 'The Great Commission of Matthew 28. 18–20: A Missionary Mandate or Not?', *Evangelical Review*, 2 (1978), 254–67; N. A. Dahl, *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), especially pp. 70–94.

'preaching'. Whereas in Insular Latin *predicatio* generally referred to any public exposition of Christian precepts and texts whatever the status of the audience,[14] the word was used by Boniface and his correspondents in the context of his mission to refer almost exclusively to the preaching of the Gospel to the erring, unbaptized and unbelieving, as is demonstrated by Appendix 1. 3. Whenever the audience of Boniface's *predicatio* is directly stated in the letters, they were not established Christian communities in need of regular pastoral preaching, but 'unbelieving peoples',[15] 'pagans',[16] and 'a faithless population',[17] who were 'trapped in the error of paganism'.[18]

Members of earlier missions, specifically the missions to Frisia and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, were also referred to as *predicatores*. Thus Boniface, when appealing to Pope Stephen during a dispute between himself and the Bishop of Cologne over the control of the bishopric of Utrecht, three times described Willibrord as *predicator* and six times used the verb *predicare* to characterize the mission in Frisia (he also used *convertere* twice).[19] Boniface and Pope Zacharias similarly viewed the original missionaries sent by Gregory the Great to Kent as *predicatores*.[20]

The term *ministerium* was also frequently used in the letters to describe Boniface's mission, but had a somewhat broader connotation. Whereas *predicatio* referred to evangelization, *ministerium* could encompass both the task of missionary preaching ('ministerium exhortationis sanctae catholice fidei')[21] and, in more general terms, the pastoral care of a converted population. In his letter of 752 to Abbot Fulrad, for instance, Boniface wrote that the priests of his missionary territory were 'settled in many places for the ministry of the church and the

---

[14] See *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 365–66.

[15] '[G]entes incredulae': Tangl, ep. 12, p. 17, ll. 15–16.

[16] '[G]entiles / pagani': Tangl, ep. 23, p. 38, ll. 18–21; ep. 105, p. 230, ll. 18–21; ep. 75, p. 157, ll. 15–17.

[17] '[P]opulus infidelis': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 9–10.

[18] '[G]entilitatis errore detenti': Tangl, ep. 20, p. 34, ll. 9–11. '[M]ultitudinem gentilium idolatriae vetustissimo errore miserabiliter deceptam': Tangl, ep. 105, p. 230, ll. 18–21.

[19] Tangl, ep. 109, pp. 235–36.

[20] For a query of Boniface to Nothelm of Canterbury concerning the Gregorian mission, see Tangl, ep. 33, p. 58, ll. 11–13; for a letter of Zacharias to Boniface, see Tangl, ep. 80, p. 173, ll. 13–19.

[21] Tangl, ep. 42, p. 67, ll. 25–26. Also 'ministerium verbi': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 8–9.

people'[22] and requested of Pippin that Lul be acknowledged as his successor 'in the ministry of the peoples and churches'.[23] His missionaries who lived on the borders of pagan territory, he wrote, needed external support if they were to continue in the 'ministry of the people'.[24] The priest Wigberht, when he wrote to Lul between 754 and 786 that he was prepared to return to Germania, requested to be sent 'to the church and ministry to which I was formerly devoted',[25] here using *ministerium* to refer to the administration of a single parish. Finally, Boniface remarked to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury that they shared one and the same ministry: 'For the work of our ministry proceeds from one and the same cause.'[26]

## Mission as *Peregrinatio*

These two major components of Boniface's mission, *predicatio* and *ministerium*, are supplemented by a third in the surviving letters: *peregrinatio*, which has the meaning of 'travelling/residing abroad or away from home' in classical Latin,[27] and which in the letters of Boniface and Lul carried strong connotations of self-imposed exile, as we shall see. Especially noteworthy is the distribution of this particular characterization of mission according to correspondents (see Appendix 1. 2). *Predicatio* and *ministerium* were used frequently throughout the letters, although significantly more often in letters written to and from the papacy than between Anglo-Saxons, whereas *peregrinatio*, *peregrinus*, and *peregrinari* appear only in letters written by Anglo-Saxons, and overwhelmingly when both sender and recipient were Anglo-Saxon (sixteen of nineteen occurrences). This distinction calls for explanation.[28]

---

[22] '[P]er multa loca ad ministerium ecclesiae et populorum constituti': Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, ll. 11–12.

[23] '[I]n hoc ministerium populorum et ecclesiarum conponere': Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, ll. 22–23.

[24] '[A]d ministerium populi': Tangl, ep. 93, p. 214, l. 1.

[25] '[U]t [...] ecclesiae et ministerio, cui ante deservivi, me dimittas, dignum rogo et obsecro': Tangl, ep. 138, p. 278, ll. 3–4.

[26] 'Nam labor nostri ministrii unius et eiusdem causae esse dinoscitur': Tangl, ep. 78, p. 162, ll. 13–14.

[27] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. by P. G. W. Glare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 1335.

[28] Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*, p. 254, has also noted this feature of the letters, but not explored it in any detail.

There is no reason to doubt that the popes would have understood the concept of *peregrinatio* in relation to preaching far from one's homeland, for it was rooted firmly in biblical and patristic tradition.[29] The Latin word *peregrinus*, originally denoting a 'foreigner' in both the legal and non-legal sense,[30] gained specifically Christian meanings from Jerome's Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments and from the theology of Augustine of Hippo. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that all men were 'estranged from God' while living on earth (*peregrinamur a Domino*),[31] but this was an involuntary state; like any stranger in a foreign land, the Christian longed to return home.[32] For Augustine in the early fifth century, the dominant meaning of *peregrinus* was still 'foreigner', not 'traveller' or 'pilgrim'. Like Paul, he viewed *peregrinatio* as a miserable, hazardous, negative state that was rarely voluntary, and these very characteristics made it a suitable metaphor for human existence away from the spiritual homeland of heaven.[33] Augustine and the other Church Fathers tended to emphasize this allegorical interpretation of the Christian as *peregrinus* rather than encourage literal 'peregrinatio pro amore Christi'.[34] By the seventh century, as Maribel Dietz and Gillian Clark have recently discussed,[35] the word *peregrinatio* had developed

[29] On the biblical models of *peregrinatio*, see A. Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini: Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters* (Munich: Fink, 1972), especially pp. 127–37. On *peregrinatio* as an early medieval hagiographical topos, see Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 93–97.

[30] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. by Glare, p. 1335. In his *Confessions*, Augustine described his residence in Milan as a *peregrinatio*, although he was a citizen of the Roman Empire and was thus, legally speaking, not a *peregrinus*: '[Ambrosius] suscepit me paterne ille homo dei et peregrinationem meam satis episcopaliter dilexit' (Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, ed. by J. J. O'Donnell, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), V. 13. 23, (I, 56)). G. Clark, 'Pilgrims and Foreigners: Augustine on Travelling Home', in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity: Sacred and Profane*, ed. by L. Ellis and F. L. Kidner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 149–58 (p. 153).

[31] II Corinthians 5. 6.

[32] '[B]onam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpore et praesentes esse ad Deum': II Corinthians 5. 8. See also Hebrews 11. 13–16.

[33] P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), p. 323. *A Glossary of Later Latin to A.D. 600*, ed. by A. Souter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 294, defines *peregrinatio* as a 'sojourn on earth (*of those whose real home is Heaven*)'.

[34] Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, pp. 28–29. Clark asks whether Augustine, when bishop of Carthage, actively opposed literal interpretation of the Christian as a *peregrinus* and the social dislocation which it could cause. Clark, 'Pilgrims and Foreigners', p. 155.

[35] Clark, 'Pilgrims and Foreigners'; M. Dietz, 'Itinerant Spirituality and the Late Antique Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in *Travel, Communication and Geography,* ed. by Ellis and Kidner, pp. 125–34; Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, pp. 27–42.

among some Christians to mean something akin to 'pilgrimage', that is, a deliberate journey to a person or site of special holiness with an intended return home.[36] According to the *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, the earliest appearance of the word in this sense is, in fact, from a letter of Gregory the Great.[37]

It does not seem, however, that Boniface and his correspondents understood *peregrinatio* in the later medieval sense of pilgrimage. The Abbess Eangyth did use the word *peregrinatio* when she asked Boniface for advice on her proposed journey to Rome,[38] but it is quite clear that she was not intending to return: for her, *peregrinatio* meant permanent, self-imposed exile in a foreign land, not, as Emerton conventionally translates it, pilgrimage.[39] Similarly, Bugga's intended *peregrinatio* in Rome was to mark her retirement as an abbess and the closing chapter of her life, as it had done for Boniface's friend Wiethberga.[40] On the one occasion when Boniface does refer to Anglo-Saxon nuns who make what appear to be return pilgrimages to Rome, in a letter to Cuthbert of Canterbury, he describes the activity as 'that frequent journey [*iter*] that they make to and from the city of Rome',[41] not as *peregrinatio*.

The same concept of *peregrinatio* as an ideally permanent religious exile appears throughout Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and his *Historia abbatum*.[42] For Bede, the mission of Augustine and his companions to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms constituted a *peregrinatio*,[43] as did the departure of numerous Anglo-Saxon nuns

---

[36] This is the chief meaning of the word given in *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List*, ed. by Latham, p. 342, and *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, ed. by J. F. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 1026. On early Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, see P. Maraval, 'The Earliest Phase of Christian Pilgrimage in the Near East (Before the 7th Century)', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002), 63–74.

[37] *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, p. 1026; Gregory the Great, *S. Gregorii Magni Registrum epistolarum, libri VIII–XIV*, ed. by D. L. Norberg, CCSL, 140A (1982), VIII. 22, p. 542, l. 31.

[38] Eangyth asks Boniface whether it would be better for her and her daughter 'to live on our native soil or to be exiled in *peregrinatio*' (sive in patrio solo vivere vel in peregrinatione exulare; Tangl, ep. 14, p. 26, l. 4).

[39] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 17.

[40] Tangl, ep. 27, p. 48, ll. 5–25.

[41] '[I]llud iter et frequentiam, quam ad Romanam civitatem veniendo et redeundo faciant': Tangl, ep. 78, p. 169, ll. 20–21.

[42] On the numerous Anglo-Saxon kings who abdicated in order to enter monasteries or journey to Rome, see Chapter 3, above, pp. 92–97.

[43] *HE*, I. 23, pp. 68–69; I. 25, pp. 74–75.

to Gaulish religious houses[44] and the exile of the Irishman Fursey in East Anglia.[45] Egbert's *peregrinatio* in Ireland was determinedly permanent: 'He desired to live thenceforth as an exile, and never return to Britain, the island in which he was born.'[46] Bede contrasts Egbert, who 'remained a *peregrinus* for the Lord until the end of his life', with Chad, who accompanied Egbert in Ireland but eventually returned home.[47] The later abbess Hild, too, spent a year in East Anglia intending to join her relative Hereswith as a permanent *peregrina* in Gaul, but chose to abandon her 'proposed exile', *propositum peregrinandi*, and returned to Northumbria instead.[48] The distinction between *iter* and *peregrinatio* is most clear in Bede's *Historia abbatum*. He recounted six visits of Benedict Biscop to Rome, five of which were transient visits (*itinera*), and one of which, the third, was supposed to be a permanent *peregrinatio* until he was commanded to abandon it and return to England with Theodore of Tarsus.[49] Abbot Ceolfrid made one temporary visit (*iter*) to Rome before he resolved to end his days there as an old man dwelling in exile (*peregrinari*).[50]

---

[44] *HE*, III. 8, pp. 238–39.

[45] *HE*, III. 19, pp. 268–69.

[46] '[A]deo peregrinus vivere vellet, ut numquam in insulam, in quo natus est, id est Britanniam, rediret': *HE*, III. 27, pp. 312–13.

[47] 'Sed illo [Ceadda] postmodum patriam reuerso, ipse [Ecgberctus] peregrinus pro Domino usque ad finem uitae permansit': *HE*, IV. 3, pp. 344–45.

[48] *HE*, IV. 23, pp. 406–07.

[49] '[R]elicta peregrinatione quam pro Christo susceperat': Bede, *Historia abbatum*, in *Opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 364–87 (pp. 365–67). Theodore also referred to himself as a *peregrinus* in a poem he wrote to Bishop Hæddi of Winchester: Orchard, *The Poetic Art*, p. 30. A less clear instance is in the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi* (whose author may actually be Bede), where, shortly before his death, Benedict returns to Wearmouth-Jarrow from his final trip to Rome 'bearing, as ever, the prize of *peregrinatio*' (peregrina merce, ut semper, onustus; Anon., *Vita Ceolfridi*, in *Opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 388–404 (chap. 15, p. 393)). The implication may be that Benedict's death at Wearmouth-Jarrow so soon after his return was equivalent to his having died a *peregrinus* at Rome.

[50] Bede quotes a letter of Abbot Hwaetbert to Gregory II, in which Hwaetbert recommends his predecessor Ceolfrid, who 'now an old man nearing his death, wishes to return in exile for Christ' (prope iam moriturus, rursus incipit peregrinari pro Christo; Bede, *Historia abbatum*, p. 384). Ceolfrid did not reach Rome, but died in Langres. See also the *Vita Ceolfridi*: 'inuenit utile consilium ut [...] ipse apostolorum limina peregrinaturus adiret; ibique terrenis absolutus curis inter libera orationum studia diem spectaret ultimum, imitatus exemplum fratris sui Cynefrid, qui [...] et patriam propter Dominum spontaneo mutauit exsilio' (Anon., *Vita Ceolfridi*, chap. 21, p. 395).

In short, *peregrinatio* for Boniface and his compatriots described permanent religious exile rather than the more transient state of what would later be called *pilgrimages*, which Boniface and Bede tended simply to call *itinera*, 'journeys'. Furthermore, they used *peregrinatio* more often in the literal sense of a sojourn in a foreign country than in Augustine's allegorical sense of corporeal exile from one's heavenly homeland.[51] This does, of course, reflect the reality of their situation, and it also accords with insular tradition. One of the most distinctive features of early Irish Christianity was a propensity towards self-imposed exile *pro amore Christi* in literal, almost aggressive, obedience to Christ's injunction to abandon home and family for his sake.[52] This Irish tradition had an enormous influence upon early Anglo-Saxon Christianity,[53] sharply evidenced in the letter to Aldhelm by the late seventh-century Irishman Cellanus, who portrayed his own situation in Francia in terms very similar to those used by Boniface some decades later. First, Cellanus described himself as 'an exile dwelling in the very far corner of the border of the Franks',[54] and requested that Aldhelm send him some writings if he should desire 'to relieve the sorrowful little heart of an exile'.[55] Compare Boniface's use of the term *exul* and the expression 'the dark corners of the Ger-

---

[51] Boniface cites Augustine during a rumination on the plight of the *peregrinus* in one of his letters to Gemmulus, but only with regard to *peregrinatio* as a corporeal, not spiritual, state of existence: 'Et, sicut sanctus Augustinus dixit, licet unus sit in oriente et alius in occidente, conglutinata caritate numquam ab invicem separantur' (Tangl, ep. 104, p. 228; And, just as St Augustine says, even if one is in the east and the other in the west, they shall never be separated because of the binding love they share). The more theologically minded Bede twice included the concept of *peregrinatio* in his *Historia ecclesiastica* as an allegory in the Augustinian sense, first concerning the end of Ine's life in Rome (*HE*, v. 7, pp. 472–73), and second when quoting Abbot Ceolfrid's letter to the Pictish king (*HE*, v. 21, pp. 534–35).

[52] On the much-studied tradition of Irish *peregrinatio*, see especially C. P. Thom, 'The Ascetical Theology and Praxis of Sixth to Eighth Century Irish Monasticism as a Radical Response to the *Evangelium*' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Australian Catholic University, 2002), pp. 164–72; T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', *Celtica*, 11 (1976), 43–59; A. Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, pp. 52–79; C. Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick, and D. Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46.

[53] On the influence of Irish traditions of *peregrinatio* specifically on the West Saxon church of Boniface's time, see Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections'.

[54] '[I]n extremo Francorum limitis latens angulo exul': Aldhelm, *Epistulae*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 475–503 (ep. 3, p. 498, l. 5).

[55] '[S]i peregrini triste reficere vis corculum': Aldhelm, *Epistulae*, ep. 3, p. 498, l. 12.

manic peoples', as well as the relief with which he received sacred texts sent by Eadburg (emphasis added):

> May the eternal rewarder of all good deeds praise the dearest sister in the upper choir of angels, for by sending gifts of sacred books she has *consoled with spiritual light a Germanic exile* [...] who is bound to enlighten the dark *corners of the Germanic peoples*.[56]

Yet the *peregrinationes* of Willibrord and Boniface, with their emphasis on *predicatio* and *ministerium*, differed fundamentally from those of their Irish predecessors, who were more concerned with personal penance and establishing monastic centres than with evangelization.[57] *Predicatio* and *ministerium* were concepts which Gregory II and his successors understood and enthusiastically supported, yet *peregrinatio*, at least in its peculiarly insular form, does not appear to have formed part of the papal conception of Boniface's mission. It was a term used almost exclusively among Anglo-Saxons in the letters; the most immediate explanation for this is that within their discourse it carried certain connotations that it would not have had in letters between Boniface and the popes.

Only three times did Boniface use the term *peregrinus* when writing to non-Anglo-Saxons in his surviving correspondence: once in a letter to Fulrad of St Denis, when, concerned for their security after his death, he described his missionaries in literal terms as being *pene omnes peregrini*, 'almost all foreigners',[58] that is, non-Franks; and twice in a single letter to Gemmulus of Rome, in which he felt compelled to discuss the condition of the *peregrinus* at length with one who was unfamiliar with its frequent use in Anglo-Saxon religious discourse.[59]

Mission as *peregrinatio*, then, was a uniquely Anglo-Saxon concept that formed a dominant element of discourse between the missionaries themselves and their native support base.[60] For Boniface and his companions, *peregrinatio*

---

[56] 'Carissimam sororem remunerator aeternus iustorum operum in superna laetificet curia angelorum, quae sanctorum librorum munera transmittendo *exulem Germanicum spiritali lumine consolata est* [...] qui tenebrosos *angulos Germanicarum gentium* lustrare debet': Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, ll. 9–13.

[57] A. Wendehorst, 'Die Iren und die Christianisierung Mainfrankens', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, pp. 319–41 (pp. 321–22). In the Iro-Frankish tradition, *peregrinatio* came to refer simply to the monastic life itself, without necessarily implying any travel to foreign lands. See F. Prinz, 'Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 445–65 (pp. 451–52); Angenendt, *Monachi Peregini*, p. 153; Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', pp. 38–40.

[58] Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, l. 11.

[59] Tangl, ep. 104, p. 228.

[60] Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*, p. 257.

was not merely about seeking a foreign wilderness and suffering the misery of exile according to the Irish model — although, as we shall see, misery and hardship were defining cultural features of exile for the missionaries — but also involved challenging and defeating paganism in accordance with the Great Commission. One's personal salvation thus became intrinsically linked to the grand narrative of Christ's coming triumph: they were, as Hans von Campenhausen put it, *Missionsperegrini*.[61] Our next step will be to consider in more detail the poetic and metaphorical representation of aspects of the mission in the surviving letters, and observe how the portrayal of the mission's hardships in particular formulaic terms was, like the concept of *peregrinatio*, restricted to letters between Anglo-Saxons.

## Metaphors and Motifs Used to Represent the Mission

### Paganism as Captivity, Darkness, and Ignorance

In Appendix 2. 1, I have listed every appearance in the letters of Boniface and Lul of motifs and metaphors representing Germanic paganism. For Boniface and his correspondents, the three metaphors most frequently used to depict pagans and paganism were captivity, darkness, and ignorance. It must be remembered that these were rhetorical, not analytical labels. As discussed in Chapter 4 above,[62] there had been communities of Frankish Christians in Hessia for many years before Boniface's arrival, and even the paganism of the Hessian-Saxon borderlands had probably been influenced to some extent by Christian beliefs and rituals. When in the next chapter we consider the evidence for the development of such syncretic forms of religion in Hessia during Boniface's mission, we shall recall the fact that the literary motifs employed by the missionaries were soteriological rather than descriptive.[63]

The metaphor of captivity, occasionally used in the letters of St Paul to describe the state of those who succumbed to Satan,[64] was adopted by Boniface

---

[61] H. (Freiherr) von Campenhausen, *Die asketische Heimatlosigkeit im altkirchlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Mönchtum*, Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte, 149 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930), pp. 26–28; see also K. Hauck, 'Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa', *Frühmittelalterlichen Studien*, 1 (1967), 3–93 (pp. 62–63); Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*, pp. 206–07.

[62] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 177–84.

[63] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 380–87.

[64] For example, I Timothy 3. 7, 6. 9; II Timothy 2. 26.

and his contemporaries to describe pagans in Germania. They were 'held back by error',[65] 'enslaved to idols',[66] 'shackled',[67] and 'caught in the snare of Satan the hunter'.[68] The phrase *in umbra mortis* (in the shadow of death) was used twice by Gregory II and once by Gregory III to describe the condition of pagans across the Rhine.[69] The motif appears many times in the Book of Job and the Book of Psalms to illustrate a state of abandonment of God, despair, and often captivity. For example, Psalm 106 says of the Israelites:

> Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death: bound in want and in iron. Because they had exasperated the words of God: and provoked the counsel of the most High: And their heart was humbled with labours: they were weakened, and there was none to help them. Then they cried to the Lord in their affliction: and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death; and broke their bonds in sunder.[70]

As in this psalm, *umbra*, 'shadow, darkness', was used as a synonym for *tenebrae* in the letters of Boniface and Lul. The agents of Satan, wrote Gregory III, were the 'sons of darkness',[71] while Boniface described himself as dwelling in the 'dark corners of the Germanic peoples'.[72] The imagery of pagan darkness, at least to a Roman such as Gregory II, was especially pertinent to the 'gloomy forest' of Germania,[73] for this had been an important motif of the Roman perception of the lands beyond the Rhine and Danube since at least the first century AD.[74]

Finally, the characterization of paganism as ignorance of God, wilful, or otherwise, had its biblical roots in the sermons of Moses to the Israelites warning

---

[65] '[E]rrore detenti': Tangl, ep. 12, p. 17, ll. 29–30.

[66] '[I]dolorum culturae eos servire': Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, ll. 7–10.

[67] '[P]repediti': Tangl, ep. 20, p. 34, l. 12.

[68] '[L]aqueo venantis satanae; a diabuli laqueis, a quibus capti tenentur': Tangl, ep. 46, p. 75, l. 4.

[69] Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, l. 7; ep. 24, p. 42, l. 5; ep. 28, p. 49, l. 15.

[70] '[H]abitantes in tenebris et umbra mortis alligatos inopia et ferro quia provocaverunt sermones Dei et consilium Excelsi blasphemaverunt et humiliavit in labore cor eorum ceciderunt et non erat qui adiuvaret et clamaverunt ad Dominum in tribulatione sua et de angustiis eorum salvavit eos et eduxit eos de tenebris et umbra mortis et vincula eorum disrupit': Psalms 106. 10–14; trans. Douay-Rheims, p. 640.

[71] '[F]ilii tenebrarum': Tangl, ep. 21, p. 35, ll. 27–28.

[72] '[T]enebrosi anguli Germanicarum gentium': Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, l. 12.

[73] '[O]paca silva': Tangl, ep. 26, p. 47, l. 18.

[74] See below, pp. 263–71.

against their worship of graven images,[75] and was a theme frequently employed by St Paul in his letters.[76] In the letters of Boniface and Lul, the term most frequently used to describe pagan 'ignorance' was *error*, while other conceptually related terms include *ignorantia*, *indoctus*, *inspiens*, *absurdus*, and *vanitas*; Gregory II also likened pagans to 'brutish animals', the implication being that they lacked human reason and self-control.[77] Terms used to describe ignorance were often closely linked to those describing captivity and darkness: thus pagans were 'detained by error', as we have seen, and 'shackled in the darkness of ignorance'.[78]

## Christianity as Freedom, Light, and Wisdom

Negative motifs of captivity, darkness, and ignorance were not employed in the letters by themselves, but were frequently juxtaposed with the contrasting benefits of Christianity: freedom, light, and wisdom. The use of freedom/captivity as a literary motif depended upon the assumption that any prisoner, even one who must first be convinced of his own imprisonment, inevitably desires to be freed. The ultimate 'salvation', of course, was only to be found in acceptance of Christ. One of the lines most frequently cited by the popes and missionaries was from Paul's first letter to Timothy: '[God] desires all men to be saved and to come to a recognition of the truth.'[79] Boniface portrayed the Old Saxons as unwitting captives who deserved freedom when, again with reference to a letter of Paul to Timothy, he requested prayers that 'they might escape from the snares of the Devil'.[80]

---

[75] See especially Deuteronomy 4. 15–19 and 30. 15–18.

[76] Ephesians 4. 22; I Timothy 4. 1; II Timothy 3. 12–13; see also James 5. 19–20; II Peter 3. 17; Jude 1. 11.

[77] '[B]ruta animalia': Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, l. 12; see also Tangl, ep. 26, p. 45, ll. 5–10, where Gregory II advised Boniface to permit marriages between first cousins in recently converted populations 'because moderation is better than strictness of discipline, especially for so barbaric a people' (quia temperantia magis et presertim in tam barbaram gentem placet plus quam districtione censure). On the late antique topos of the archetypal barbarian as a slave to lust and irrationality, see P. Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity: Image, Reality and Transformation', in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by R. Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 234–58 (p. 237).

[78] '[I]gnorantiae obscuritatibus prepeditis': Tangl, ep. 20, p. 34, l. 12.

[79] '[Deus] omnes homines vult salvos fieri et ad agnitionem veritatis venire': I Timothy 2. 4. There are five occurrences of the phrase in the surviving correspondence: Tangl, ep. 21, p. 36, ll. 13–14; ep. 38, p. 63, ll. 24–25; ep. 46, p. 74, ll. 1–2; ep. 65, p. 138, ll. 2–3; ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 10–11.

[80] '[R]esipiscant a diabuli laqueis': Tangl, ep. 46, p. 75, l. 4; II Timothy, 2. 26.

The most common metaphor for Christianity in the letters was light, in contrast to the darkness of Satan. Boniface did not merely endure the 'dark corners of the Germanic peoples', but was 'pledged to illuminate' them.[81] He was sent to Germania by Gregory II 'for the illumination of the peoples',[82] to 'lead the people from darkness into the light',[83] and through his mouth God was 'to glitter with the light of truth in the gloomy forests'.[84] Such imagery was used in the letters from the very beginning of Boniface's mission, and was recycled constantly over the following thirty-five years, as can be seen in Appendix 2. 2.

Boniface and his correspondents, in particular the popes, also emphasized the wisdom to be gained from conversion. Gregory II pronounced that the Germanic tribes' ignorance of God was to be tackled by 'harmonious reason',[85] while Gregory III urged the Old Saxons to 'come to a recognition of the truth'[86] and to accept from Christ the 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge'.[87] Daniel of Winchester invoked reason in his letter to Boniface advising him on methods of conversion:

> Hence, with devoted goodwill, I have taken care to suggest to your Prudence a few small things, by regarding which you might, according to my judgement, more speedily overcome the chief obstinacy of the barbarians with reason.[88]

Thus, at least for Daniel, the supposedly superior Christian powers of reasoning were not a rhetorical motif, but a tool to be employed where possible in the process of evangelization.

## Mission as Harvest

Perhaps the richest metaphor for mission was that of the 'harvest of souls', which appears in eleven letters (Appendix 2. 3). Two parables, of the sower and of the

---

[81] '[T]enebrosos angulos Germanicarum gentium lustrare debet': Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, ll. 13–14.

[82] '[A]d inluminationem gentium'; 'ad lucem gentium': Tangl, ep. 17, p. 31, ll. 2–3; ep. 20, p. 34, l. 18.

[83] '[A] tenebris ad lucem populum illum [...] reducat': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 13–14.

[84] '[I]n opacem silvam lumine veritatis per os tuum micare': Tangl, ep. 26, p. 47, ll. 18–19.

[85] '[C]onsona ratio': Tangl, ep. 12, p. 18, ll. 3–4.

[86] '[A]d agnitionem veritatis venire': Tangl, ep. 21, p. 36, ll. 13–14.

[87] '[T]hesauri sapientiae et scientiae': Tangl, ep. 21, p. 35, ll. 14–15.

[88] 'Unde et devota benivolentia pauca tuae suggerere prudentiae curavi, quo magis advertas, secundem meum sensum qua potissimum ratione obstinationem agrestium convincere promptus queas': Tangl, ep. 23, p. 39, ll. 5–8.

cockle of the field, both in the Gospel of Matthew, were the basis for the metaphor. In the first, Christ likened those who received the word of God to ground that received seed at sowing time: some seed fell on stony ground and grew quickly, only to die for want of deep roots, some was choked by thorns, and some fell on rich earth, producing a rich harvest.[89] The parable of the cockle of the field describes how the enemies of the sower came to his field and planted weeds among his crop. Rather than damaging his healthy wheat by pulling out the weeds prematurely, the sower decided to wait until harvest to separate the good crop from the bad.[90]

The strength of the harvest metaphor was that it could be used to describe both success and adversity in vivid terms. Boniface apparently had a dream during his second Frisian mission in which he foresaw his future success. He either assumed the persona of a harvest labourer in the dream itself, or else Bugga selected harvest as the most suitable metaphor when she referred to the dream in a letter of 719x21: 'Then he revealed to you in a dream that it was your duty to reap the harvest of God, gathering in sheaves of holy souls into the storehouse of the heavenly kingdom.'[91] A mission, like sowing and gathering in a harvest, was a long, physically strenuous process that required continual vigilance and care to prevent one's effort going to waste, but which could produce a bountiful reward.[92] At some point in the mission in Germania (the letter is undated), an unknown monk wrote words of encouragement to a novice missionary, and chose the metaphor of harvest to do so: 'Go, with God's help, to where the harvest is.'[93] The same monk,[94] along with Gregory II in a letter of 724,[95] and Gregory III in the Herford letter of *c.* 741,[96] quoted a passage from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke which would have been relevant to an understaffed mission: 'Then he saith to his

---

[89] Matthew 13. 18–23; also Luke 4. 5–8.

[90] Matthew 13. 37–40.

[91] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 18; 'Deinde per somnium temet ipso revelavit, quod debuisti manifeste messem Dei metere et congregare sanctarum animarum manipulos in horream regni caelestis': Tangl, ep. 15, p. 27, ll. 11–14.

[92] For the use of the harvest metaphor to depict success, see in particular Tangl, ep. 23, p. 38, ll. 18–21; ep. 26, p. 44, ll. 18–21.

[93] '[T]ende, ubi messis est Deo adiuvante': Tangl, ep. 148, p. 284, l. 2.

[94] '"Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci" et cetera': Tangl, ep. 148, p. 284, l. 3.

[95] 'Obsecrate "dominum messis, ut eiciat operarios in messem suam"': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 41, l. 31 to p. 42, l. 1.

[96] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 217–25.

disciples, The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.'[97]

When Boniface wished to dramatize his conflicts with the Frankish church, which he generally regarded as being morally corrupt and hostile to his mission,[98] he invoked the parable of the cockle of the field. The seed of the Gospel which he had sown, he complained to Daniel of Winchester between 742 and 746, was either 'smothered by tares' that had been planted by his enemies or 'turned into a noxious type of weed'.[99] Daniel, in his reply, paraphrased Boniface and affirmed that 'they have tried to smother the cornfields commissioned to your Reverence by sowing within them barren tares',[100] but reminded him of the message of the parable: what cannot be remedied must be endured with patience until Judgement Day. The complex metaphor of the harvest, therefore, could be used by missionaries as an active and constructive element of discourse in a way that simpler metaphors of light/darkness and freedom/captivity could not.

## Mission as Turbulence, Danger, and Suffering

The presentation of the mission as a great physical, emotional, and spiritual trial was, like the motif of *peregrinatio*, restricted to Anglo-Saxon correspondents in the surviving letters (Appendix 2. 4). Although the popes were kept well aware of the practical problems faced by Boniface and his companions, especially regarding attacks by pagans and the machinations of the Frankish nobility and church, they did not receive the formulaic literary lamentations that Boniface and Lul directed towards their compatriots. Again, the cause of this distribution may have lain in the distinct expectations and understanding of the Anglo-Saxon audience, which we shall consider in more detail shortly, as well as in a feeling that such plaintive language was not appropriate when addressing the Pope.

Lamentations of suffering, hardship, and adversity appear in the earliest surviving letters written by Boniface in Germania to his Anglo-Saxon correspondents

---

[97] '[T]unc dicit discipulis suis messis quidem multa operarii autem pauci rogate ergo dominum messis ut eiciat operarios in messem suam': Matthew 9. 37–38; Luke 10. 2; trans. Douay-Rheims, p. 13.

[98] See Chapter 7, below, pp. 349–56 and pp. 387–96.

[99] '[C]um lolio superseminare et suffocare nituntur vel in herbam pestiferi generis convertere': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 129, ll. 17–19.

[100] '[S]egetem vestrae venerabilitati commissam sterile lolium interserendo suffocare conentur': Tangl, ep. 64, p. 133, ll. 20–21.

(from 735), and recur throughout the corpus. The vocabulary employed was diverse; the most frequently employed terms were *tribulatio*, *tempestates*, the adjective *periculosus*, and the verb *quatior*. Other nouns used less frequently by Boniface, Lul, and their correspondents to depict suffering included *sollicitudo*, *tristitia*, *turbines*, *procella*, *meror*, *fluctus*, *pugnae*, *timores*, *angor*, *molestia*, *mala*, *angustia*, and *difficultates*. Other adjectives and verbs used were *procellosus*, *concussus*, *ferocitas*, *periclitari*, *fatigari*, *deprimi*, *inlidi*, *pati*, *conturbari*, and *tundi*. The missionaries occasionally requested prayers and gifts of books or clothes as *solamen*, *solacium*, and *consolatio* in their trials.

Suffering was frequently represented in the letters by imagery of violent storms, winds, and unruly oceans, and the physical effect these had on those trapped within them. The metaphor of the church as a ship caught in a turbulent sea of sin, temptation, and hostility was widespread among patristic authors, in particular Augustine,[101] and was also employed by Bede[102] and later Anglo-Saxon poets.[103] In the letters of Boniface and Lul, verbs that evoked this metaphor frequently appeared in the passive voice, increasing the impression of the missionaries as helpless and disorientated by forces beyond their control. The degree to which the metaphorical depiction of suffering in the letters represented the experience of Boniface and his companions, rather than merely fulfilling the expectations of their Anglo-Saxon audience, is unclear. Most of the letters in question were written between 738 and 754, which we know was indeed a testing

[101] See Augustine's commentary on Matthew 14. 24–33, in which he combines the motifs of Christian as *peregrinus*, sea as the turbulence of life, and ship as the safety of the church: 'Nemo quippe in hoc saeculo non peregrinus est: quamvis non omnes ad patriam redire desiderent. Ex ipso autem itinere fluctus tempestatesque patimur: sed opus est vel in navi simus. Nam si in navi pericula sunt, sine navi certus interitus [...]. Interea navis portans discipulos, id est, Ecclesia, fluctuat et quatitur tempestatibus tentationum: et non quiescit ventus contrarius, id est, adversans ei diabolus, et impedire nititur ne perveniat ad quietem' (Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo LXXV*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XXXVIII (1845), cols 475–79 (col. 475)). See H. Rahner, 'Antenna Crucis II: Das Meer der Welt', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 66 (1942), 89–118 (pp. 91–96).

[102] See his commentary on the Book of Genesis, where he discussed the symbolism of Noah's Ark: 'Designet ergo arca Ecclesiam, designet diluvium fontem baptismi quo abluitur, designet fluctus mundi tentantis quibus probatur, designet finem in quo coronatur' (Bede, *Hexameron*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XCI (1850), cols 9A–190C (col. 87A)); also his remark on Christ's calming of the storm in the Sea of Galilee: 'Mystice autem mare turbida ac tumentia hujus saeculi volumina significat' (Bede, *Homilia XXI*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XCIV (1850), cols 110B–114D (col. 111A)).

[103] F. S. Holton, 'Old English Sea Imagery and the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 12 (1982), 208–17.

period for Boniface's mission.[104] Letters 30 to 34, meanwhile, are stylistically related in their depiction of difficulties within the mission, and are closely dated by Tangl to 735:[105]

> Tangl, ep. 30: *periculosi maris tempestatibus quatior*[106]
>
> Tangl, ep. 31: *periculosi maris tempestatibus* undique *quatimur*[107]
>
> Tangl, ep. 32: Germanicum *mare periculosum* est navigantibus[108]
>
> Tangl, ep. 33: [navis] mentis meae variis Germanicarum gentium *tempestatum fluctibus quassatam*[109]
>
> Tangl, ep. 34: senis Germanici *maris tempestatibus* undique *quassantibus fatigati*[110]

These letters were written a year or two before Boniface began his reforms of the Bavarian church, three or four years before his attempted mission in Saxony and at least five years before the onset of his major conflicts with the Frankish church, at a point in Hessian history concerning which neither Willibald nor the Frankish annals have anything specific to report. This makes it difficult to relate Boniface's complaints in these letters to any known setback or disruption to his work in Hessia or Thuringia *c.* 735, although it is possible that Charles Martel's campaign of 738 was in part provoked by Saxon aggression over the preceding years. Finally, the lack of any letters from Boniface to his Anglo-Saxon contacts during the early, apparently successful years of the Hessian mission means that they cannot be used as a comparison.

We saw above how, in the surviving corpus, the theme of *peregrinatio* is almost entirely restricted to letters between Anglo-Saxons. I gave the preliminary explanation that *peregrinatio* formed part of the culturally distinct discourse of literate Anglo-Saxon Christians, but was not a motif employed by the popes with respect to Boniface's mission. In this analysis of the metaphors and motifs used to

---

[104] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 206–16.

[105] On the dating of the letters, see Tangl, p. 54 n. 1.

[106] Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, ll. 16–17.

[107] Tangl, ep. 31, p. 55, ll. 7–8.

[108] Tangl, ep. 32, p. 55, ll. 22–23.

[109] Tangl, ep. 33, p. 57, ll. 1–2.

[110] Tangl, ep. 34, p. 58, l. 29, to p. 59, l. 1.

represent aspects of the mission in Germania, a similar distinction has arisen. Whereas poetic depictions of Christianity and paganism in terms of freedom/captivity, light/darkness, and wisdom/ignorance, along with the metaphor of the mission as harvest, were commonly used by both Anglo-Saxons and Romans, formulaic lamentations appear only in letters written between Anglo-Saxons. The fact that Boniface and his companions relied on their distant compatriots for emotional support has long been recognized.[111] This feature of the letters, however, merits further analysis if we are to understand the way in which the missionary community represented its identity and activities to an external Anglo-Saxon audience through literary discourse.

The theme of suffering is closely related to the theme of *peregrinatio* in the letters. Between 742 and 746 Boniface wrote to Daniel of Winchester that, were Daniel to send him a particular large-lettered Book of the Prophets, it would be a 'comfort in my *peregrinatio*'.[112] In the same period he wrote to Eadburg that he was 'vexed by manifold storms in the course of our *peregrinatio*'.[113] Shortly after Boniface's death, Cuthbert of Canterbury gave his perception of the mission to Lul in these terms:

> For, finally, the anguish of varied and continual tribulations are not to be erased that you yourself, like our innermost heart, endured for so long along with our father of blessed memory, the martyr Boniface, beloved unto God, amidst the persecutions of pagans, heretics and deceiving schismatics, in such a perilous and ferocity-filled *peregrinatio* for the love of the eternal homeland.[114]

---

[111] See, for example, Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 161–62; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 76; G. W. Greenaway, 'Saint Boniface as a Man of Letters', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 33–46; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 208; Schipperges, *Bonifatii ac socii eius*, p. 257; J. Gerchau, *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), p. 39.

[112] '[D]e uno solacio peregrinationis meae […] rogare velim': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, ll. 4–5. See also Lul's letter to Dealwin ('ad consolationem peregrinationis meae'), Tangl, ep. 71, p. 144, ll. 19–20; and Boniface's letter to Hwætberht (Huetberht) ('grande solacium peregrinationis nostrae'), Tangl, ep. 76, p. 159, ll. 16–17.

[113] '[C]onversatio peregrinationis nostrae variis tempestatibus inliditur': Tangl, ep. 65, p. 137, ll. 12–13.

[114] 'Non enim aliquando in memoria nostra obliterari possunt diversarum atque indefessarum tribulationum angores, quos ut viscera nostra vos ipsi cum Deo dilecto patre nostro beate memoriae Bonifatio maryre inter persecutores paganos et hereticos atque scismaticos seductores in tam periculosa ac ferocitate plena peregrinatione pro amore aeternae patriae longo tempore sustinebatis': Tangl, ep. 111, p. 239, ll. 18–25.

During Lul's episcopate in Mainz he received a letter from the priest Wigberht, who asked whether he and his companions should return to the mission field from their homeland; they were wearied by their wanderings, but were prepared to endure them further:

> We have already wandered [*peregrimus*] a great deal in the restless shifting and neglect of our lives, as though we had been poured outside ourselves. It is necessary at last to return to ourselves, understanding what is written in Scripture: 'he who sows in tears, shall reap in joy'. Therefore we shall strive to pass through whatever of our lives remains with your advice.[115]

A further important feature of the testing *peregrinatio* of the missionaries was its location. Boniface was not merely an *exul*, but an *exul Germanicus*.[116] He was, as we have seen, pledged to illuminate the 'dark corners of the Germanic peoples'.[117] Moreover, he was not buffeted by ordinary storms, but by the 'storms of the Germanic sea',[118] which was 'perilous to navigators'.[119] The invocation of Germania added another dimension to the state of the suffering exile, one which was carefully constructed to resonate with an audience of literate Anglo-Saxon Christians, as we shall now see.

## Boniface as a Suffering Exul Germanicus

### Germania and Germanicum as Geographical Signifiers

Before going further, I will clarify here that I use the term *Germanic* throughout this book as a linguistic and geographical, not ethnic or cultural, signifier. In the linguistic sense, I use the term to refer to the Germanic family of languages, which included Old English, Old Saxon (Old Low German), Old High German, Frisian, and the Gothic and Scandinavian languages. In the geographical sense, I use *Germanic* to mean 'of or pertaining to Germania', the physical definition of which

---

[115] 'Multum iam vitae nostrae fluctuando et neglegendo, quasi extra nos fusi, peregrimus. Tandem aliquando, ut ad nosmet ipsos redeamus, necesse est; scientes scriptum, quod, qui seminat in lacrimis, in gaudio metet. Et ideo vitae nostrae quod restat, cum vestro consilio transcurrere curamus': Tangl, ep. 137, p. 276, ll. 19–24.

[116] Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, l. 11.

[117] '[T]enebrosi anguli Germanicarum gentium': Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, ll. 12–13.

[118] 'Germanici maris tempestatibus': Tangl, ep. 34, p. 58, l. 29, to p. 59, l. 1.

[119] 'Germanicum mare periculosum est navigantibus': Tangl, ep. 32, p. 55, ll. 22–23.

we shall discuss shortly. This clarification is necessary because of the problematic history of the term *Germanic*, which has long played a role in debates over modern national and ethnic identities that have very little to do with ancient or early medieval periods.[120] As Herwig Wolfram put it, the term has for a long time 'had to suffice as a yardstick of ethnographic classification',[121] and has frequently been used to imply a greater degree of ethnic and cultural unity between the various medieval Germanic-speaking peoples than can be securely demonstrated.[122] Especially in a regional study such as this one, speaking of 'Germanic' instead of Hessian, Saxon, Frankish, or Anglo-Saxon culture would only confuse, rather than elucidate, the matters under discussion.

[120] For further discussion, see W. Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 57, 2nd edn (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004), especially pp. 1–10; H.-W. Goetz, 'Introduction', in *Regna et gentes: The Relationship between Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 1–11 (p. 7); R. Simek, *Religion und Mythologie der Germanen* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2003), pp. 14–18; R. Schmoeckel, *Bevor es Deutschland gab: Expedition in unsere Frühgeschichte von den Römern bis zu den Sachsenkaisern* (Bergisch Gladbach: Lübbe, 2002), pp. 16–17; F. Hubert, '*Volksturm* as Paradigm: Germanic People and Gallo-Romans in Early Medieval Archaeology since the 1930s', in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by A. Gillett, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp. 177–200.

[121] Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, p. 3.

[122] See for example D. H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially pp. 4–12. Green's book is primarily a philological study and a valuable contribution to the historical debate, but tends towards an assumption of 'Germanic' cultural uniformity across the greater part of Europe between 300 BC and AD 900 that requires strict qualification. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, is flawed in part due to Russell's outdated model of 'Germanic' culture as a uniform, monolithic entity that refused to adapt itself to Christianity. M. Ravn, *Death, Ritual and Germanic Social Structure, c. AD 200–600*, BAR International Series, 1164 (Oxford: Hedges, 2003), is an archaeological study which compares Anglo-Saxon, southern Scandinavian, Gothic, and Romanian early medieval material culture in an attempt to construct a picture of 'Germanic' social structure, but at no point does Ravn justify the starting assumption that such a pan-European 'Germanic' culture ever existed. For a critique of the use of archaeological material to distinguish between 'Celtic', 'Roman', and 'German' ethnic identities, see P. S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), especially p. 264; for a critique of the historical concept of a pan-Germanic cultural and ethnic identity in late antiquity, see P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. xv, 327–30; W. Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London: Hambledon, 1989), pp. 4–5; Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, pp. 3–11.

Both the place-name *Germania* and the adjective *Germanicum* appear numerous times in the letters of Boniface and Lul, and so it is possible for us to understand something of contemporary terminology. First of all, it is apparent from Appendix 3 that the classical collective noun *Germani*, 'Germans', does not appear in the letters at all. Boniface and his correspondents referred to the *gens/gentes Germaniae*, 'people(s) of Germania'; *populus Germaniae*, 'population of Germania'; *gentes in Germaniae partibus*, 'peoples in regions of Germania'; and *gens/gentes Germanica/ae*, 'Germanic people(s)', but conspicuously avoided referring to *Germani*, a loose ethnographical term which fell from use among Latin and Greek writers after the sixth century.[123]

This feature of the letters is significant, for it implies that Boniface and his correspondents understood *Germania* and *Germanicum* to be primarily geographical, not ethnic, in meaning. In an Anglo-Saxon context, the adjective *Germanicum* could admittedly have ethnic connotations, as when Aldhelm claimed to have been 'nourished in the cradle of a Germanic people'.[124] By this, however, he appears to have been alluding to the geographical origins of the Saxon *gens* in Germania, rather than using *Germanicum* as a direct ethnic signifier.[125] Similarly, when Boniface described himself as an *exul Germanicus*,[126] he was not using it as an ethnic term, which the literal English translation of 'a Germanic

[123] On Roman and post-Roman uses and meanings of the terms *Germania* and *Germani*, see H. J. Hummer, 'The Fluidity of Barbarian Identity: The Ethnogenesis of the Alemanni and Suebi, AD 200–500', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 1–27; Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After*, pp. 4–5; Wolfram, *The Roman Empire*, p. 6; P. J. Geary, 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', in *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World*, ed. by G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 107–29 (p. 114); P. J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 50–104; W. Pohl, 'Ethnicity, Theory and Tradition: A Response', in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillet, pp. 221–39 (pp. 226–27); D. Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), especially pp. 231–32; the introduction of J. B. Rives to Tacitus, *Germania*, ed. and trans. by J. B. Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 11–68. Neither *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, ed. by Niermeyer and Van de Kieft, nor *A Glossary of Later Latin*, ed. by Souter, provide an entry on *Germania*, *Germanic-*, or *Germani*.

[124] 'Germanicae gentis cunabulis confotum': Aldhelm, *De metris*, p. 202, l. 5.

[125] Compare Bede's comments concerning the origins of the Angles and Saxons among the many *nationes* who inhabited Germania, and the fact that the Britons of his time erroneously called the Anglo-Saxons *Garmani* for this reason: 'quarum in Germania plurimas nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli uel Saxones, qui nunc Brittaniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur; unde hactenus a uicina gente Brettonum corrupte Garmani nuncupantur' (*HE*, v. 9, p. 296).

[126] Tangl, ep. 30, p. 54, l. 11.

exile' might imply; rather, he meant 'an exile in Germania'.[127] The title of *legatus Germanicus*, 'Germanic [papal] legate', which Boniface appears to have applied to himself from 738 at the latest,[128] also referred to his geographical zone of responsibility, not his ethnicity, just as *mare Germanicum*, 'the Germanic sea', and *tempestates Germanicae*, 'Germanic storms', were geographical in meaning.

*Germania* was thus a convenient geographical signifier that covered a wide area of various *gentes*, and it apparently occurred to neither Boniface nor the popes that the *gentes Germaniae* should or could be lumped together as ethnically homogenous *Germani*. Indeed, Boniface and the popes often referred to his mission among the *gens/gentes Germaniae* when writing to one another, but when the popes wrote directly to the peoples in question they always took care to use the appropriate tribal names: *Hessi*, *Thuringi*, *Altsaxones*, and so on.[129]

The term *Germani* did not return to general usage until the ninth century, and then it was used chiefly as an alternative to 'eastern Franks'.[130] Radbod, revising the *Vita altera Bonifatii* between 899 and 919, also used the term *Germani* to refer to the peoples of Germania among whom Boniface had worked,[131] and styled Boniface himself as 'preacher of the Germani', by analogy with St Paul as 'teacher of the nations'.[132] Radbod's usage, however, was highly anachronistic. Removed from the complexities and concerns of the mid-eighth century, it was a simple matter for him to regard all the evangelized peoples of Hessia, Thuringia, and Saxony as Germani. Boniface and his correspondents, on the other hand, did not have (or at least did not use in their letters) a generic ethnic term to describe the diverse inhabitants of what they called *Germania*: for them, *Germanicum* referred to a geographical region.

---

[127] Emerton gives the translation 'an exile in Germany' in preference to 'a German exile' (*The Letters of Saint Boniface*, p. 39).

[128] The earliest appearance of the title is an letter of 738 from Boniface to the Anglo-Saxon church: Tangl, ep. 46, p. 74, ll. 26–27.

[129] See Tangl, ep. 19, p. 33, l. 9; ep. 21, p. 35, l. 7; ep. 25, p. 43, l. 11; ep. 43, p. 68, ll. 10–14.

[130] See for example Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, chap. 18, p. 22, ll. 12–14: 'de Fastrada uxore, quae de orientalium Francorum, Germanorum videlicet, gente erat'.

[131] '[Bonifatius] sive inter Fresones barbaros sive inter ferocissimos Germanos capite truncarentur' ([Boniface] would be beheaded among either the barbaric Frisians or the fierce Germani): Radbod, *Vita altera Bonifatii auctore Radbodo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 62–78 (p. 71, ll. 12–13). 'Audito autem, quod Germanorum plurima multitudo sine Deo esset' (having heard, however, that a great multitude of the Germani knew nothing of God): ibid., p. 67, ll. 28–29.

[132] 'Sed Paulus magister, iste discipulus, ille gentium doctor, iste Germanorum predicator': Radbod, *Vita altera Bonifatii*, p. 72, l. 28, to p. 73, l. 1.

## Boniface's Redefinition of Germania as an Ecclesiastical Province

What, then, was the geographical region that comprised Germania? Nowhere do Boniface or his correspondents provide a clear and consistent geographical definition; on the contrary, in the earliest letters at least, the term *Germania* appears to have functioned as a somewhat vague geographical signifier. Boniface's original mandate was to preach to the peoples who lived 'in Germaniae partibus vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis' (in parts of Germania or the region east of the Rhine).[133] The Latin word *vel* most often functions as a disjunctive conjunction, offering an alternative which does not exclude or contradict the matter of the original clause,[134] and here could mean 'in addition to' or 'more precisely' (contrast the use of *aut* as an excluding conjunction). Since, at least according to Willibald, Boniface appears to have worked initially *only* east of the Rhine, in Hessia and Thuringia,[135] Gregory's use of the phrase 'vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis' implies that some territories east of the Rhine may not have been considered part of Germania, while the phrase 'in Germaniae partibus' suggests that Boniface's mission was not necessarily to encompass Germania in its entirety.

Whether or not Thuringia was considered part of Germania by Boniface and the popes is also unclear from the language of the letters. In a letter of 724 Gregory II stated that he had sent Boniface generally 'for the illumination of the people of Germania',[136] but in the same letter made a distinction between the Thuringians (*Thuringi*) and the people of Germania (*Germaniae populus*),[137] who presumably included the Hessians. We have already encountered the letter of 738 which Gregory III addressed 'to the population of the provinces of Germania, to the Thuringians and Hessians, Borthari and Nistresi, Wedrecii and Lognai, Suduodi and Graffelti, and to all those living in the eastern region'.[138] Here Germania is composed of numerous provinces (*provinciae Germaniae*), which apparently

---

[133] Tangl, ep. 17, p. 30, ll. 7–8.

[134] *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. by Glare, p. 2021.

[135] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 197–200.

[136] '[A]d inluminationem Germaniae gentis': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 4–5.

[137] 'Thuringis et Germaniae populo ea, quae ad animae respiciunt utilitatem et salutem, scribere non omisimus': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 32–33.

[138] '[P]opulo provinciarum Germaniae, Thuringis et Hessis, Bortharis et Nistresis, Uuedreciis et Lognais, Suduodis et Graffeltis vel omnibus in orientali plaga constitutis': Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, ll. 10–14.

included both Thuringians (*Thuringi*) and Hessians (*Hessi*),[139] along with several other smaller tribal groupings.[140] Gregory added the final generalization 'to all those dwelling in the eastern region [i.e., east of the Rhine]'.[141]

In summary, Gregory II and Gregory III appear to have used *Germania* in the broad sense to refer to the lands east of the Rhine, but added specific tribal names and clarifications where they felt it necessary. Boniface's mandate evidently encompassed such a patchwork of peoples and regions that it is scarcely surprising that he and the popes preferred to use the conveniently vague term *Germania* in their correspondence. Yet what was in the 720s and 730s a rather loose geographical term gained a temporary solidity following the establishment of the bishoprics of Büraburg, Erfurt, and Würzburg. Boniface informed Zacharias in 742 that he had founded three bishoprics in Germania: 'We regard it as necessary to report to your Paternity that, through the grace of God, we have ordained three bishops among the peoples of Germania who have been to some extent compelled [to convert] or corrected, and have divided the province into three dioceses.'[142]

These bishoprics divided Germania — now for the first time referred to as a single *provincia* (province) — into three *parrochias* (dioceses).[143] Boniface's novel use of the term *Germania* to refer to one province, not to a loose collection of several *partes* or sub-provinces as had hitherto been customary in the letters, reflected his intention that Germania was to become a single archiepiscopal see, incorporating Mainz, Utrecht, Büraburg, Würzburg, and Erfurt under his control as Archbishop of Cologne. In 742 he had neither Cologne nor any other archi-

---

[139] There seems to have been no standard Latinized form of the collective noun *Hessians* at this date; in a letter of 732x54, the priest Wiehtberht used the third declension *Haesones*, perhaps influenced by the third declension form *Saxones*: '[Deus] etiam nostrum iter sua voluntate in has provincias, id est in confinia paganorum Haesonum ac Saxonum [...] direxit' (Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 11–15). Willibald, in his *Vita Bonifatii* (written 754x68), used the form *Hessi*: *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, l. 5.

[140] On these tribes, see Chapter 5, above, pp. 197–200.

[141] '[O]mnibus in orientali plaga constitutis': Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, ll. 13–14.

[142] 'Necesse quoque habemus indicare paternitati vestrae, quia per Dei gratiam Germaniae populis aliquantulum percussis vel correctis tres ordinavimus episcopos et provinciam in tres parrochias discrevimus': Tangl, ep. 50, p. 81, ll. 15–18.

[143] Zacharias acknowledged that Germania was a single *provincia* in his confirmation of the bishoprics: 'innotuit [...] noster Bonifatius nuper decrevisse et ordinasse in Germaniae partibus episcopales sedes, ubi preest vestra dilectio et provinciam in tres dividisset parrochias': Tangl, ep. 52, p. 93, ll. 6–10; ep. 53, p. 94, ll. 26–30.

episcopal seat of his own, but he had nonetheless begun the process of dividing his trans-Rhenan territory into dioceses in anticipation of gaining one. Zacharias confirmed Cologne as his metropolitan seat in 745 according to plan,[144] and at the Roman synod of that year Boniface was grandly introduced as 'archbishop of the province of Germania'.[145]

This accomplishment was transitory, however. Boniface's ambitions regarding Cologne were quickly thwarted by the Franks,[146] and his eventual seat in Mainz, which he assumed in 746, was not raised to archiepiscopal status until 780/82, twenty-five years into Lul's episcopate.[147] The bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt were abandoned,[148] and in 752 Boniface was struggling to maintain his influence in Utrecht against the challenge of Bishop Hildegar of Cologne.[149] The title 'arch-bishop of the province of Germania' does not appear in any letters after 745, perhaps because Boniface's failure to establish lasting bishoprics at Büraburg and Erfurt, to secure the archbishopric of Cologne or to expand his mission into Saxony — in short, the collapse of his vision of a unified archdiocese east of the Rhine — meant that he could no longer claim to have the authority that the title implied.

## The Symbolism of Germania

Instead of inaccurately describing himself as 'archbishop of the province of Germania', Boniface retained in his letters after 745 the less presuming title of

---

[144] 'De civitate namque illa, quae nuper Agrippina vocabatur, nunc vero Colonia [...] tuo metropolim confirmavimus et tuae sanctitati direximus pro futuris temporibus eiusdem metro-politanae aecclesiae stabilitatem': Tangl, ep. 60, p. 124, ll. 23–27.

[145] '[A]rchiepiscopus provinciae Germaniae': Tangl, ep. 59, p. 109, ll. 13–14. Gemmulus had also addressed Boniface as 'archbishop of the province of Germania' in a letter of 742/43: Tangl, ep. 54, p. 96, l. 8.

[146] In 748 Zacharias wrote to Boniface acknowledging that the Franks had refused to hand over the bishopric of Cologne: 'Alia denique scripta tuae fraternitatis continebant, quod iam olim de Agrippina civitate scripsisti, quod Franci non perseveraverunt in verbo, quod promiserunt; et nunc moratur tua fraternitas in civitate Magontia' (Tangl, ep. 80, p. 179, l. 27 to p. 180, l. 1). See Chapter 5, above, pp. 226–34, and Chapter 7, below, pp. 387–96.

[147] Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 282–83.

[148] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 229–34.

[149] Boniface wrote to Pope Stephen II in 753 concerning the dispute: Tangl, ep. 109, pp. 234–36.

*legatus Germanicus*,[150] reminding his audience that he was still Rome's principal representative in Germania. His attempt to establish 'Germania' as a single ecclesiastical province had failed, but the invocation of the Latin name for the lands east of the Rhine may still have had an effect on those literate Christians in Rome and England who heard it. In 726, for example, Gregory II had written to Boniface: '[God] sent you into those regions in our stead with apostolic authority and preordained that, through your mouth, the light of truth should glitter in the gloomy forest.'[151]

Gregory's depiction of the 'gloomy forest' suggests the existence in eighth-century Rome of a view of Germania that had its origins in classical literature. Between the first century BC and the fourth century AD, Roman authors perpetuated a literary construct of Germania as a 'perverse wilderness',[152] a place of impenetrable forests and marshy bogs, where eternal cold gripped the unproductive soil and whose unfortunate inhabitants dwelled in primitive misery.[153] Julian the Apostate spent some years as a young man among the croaking, harsh-voiced Germani of the Rhine frontier, 'like some huntsman', he later wrote, 'who associates with and is entangled among wild beasts'.[154] Just as the eighth-century popes' view of the archetypal pagan was informed by the classical construct of the archetypal barbarian,[155] so the classical perception of Germania as a place of cold, gloomy forests made it a suitable setting for the symbolic confrontation of Christian light and pagan darkness that we see in the letters of Boniface and Lul.[156]

---

[150] The title *legatus Germanicus* appears in six letters after 745: Tangl, ep. 73, p. 146, l. 26; ep. 75, p. 157, l. 1; ep. 78, p. 161, l. 28; ep. 86, p. 192, l. 1; ep. 91, p. 206, l. 30 to p. 207, l. 1; ep. 109, p. 234, l. 28.

[151] '[Deus] te illis in regionibus vice nostra ex apostolica auctoritate pergere fecit et in opacem silvam lumine veritatis per os tuum micare praedistinavit': Tangl, ep. 26, p. 47, ll. 16–19.

[152] K. Sallman, 'Reserved for Eternal Punishment: The Elder Pliny's View of Free Germania (HN. 16.1–6)', *American Journal of Philology*, 108 (1987), 108–28 (p. 120).

[153] Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, p. 101; Sallman, 'Reserved for Eternal Punishment'.

[154] Julian the Apostate, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, ed. and trans. by W. C. Wright, 3 vols (London: Heinemann, 1913–23), II, 421–23, 479–81.

[155] Heather, 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity', p. 245; Geary, *The Myth of Nations*, p. 140; Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity*, p. 236.

[156] On the medieval concept of the forest as a wilderness and place of exile, see M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, I: *The Growth of Ties of Dependence*, trans. by L. A. Manyon (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 72; Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, pp. 51–53.

Daniel of Winchester appears to have had a view of Germania similar to that of the classical authors, perhaps inherited through the influence of Theodore, Hadrian, and Aldhelm.[157] He advised Boniface, when debating theological matters with pagans, to use Germania's cold and barren climate as proof of God's disfavour:

> And while the Christians possess fertile lands, rich in wine and oil and abounding with other things, they have left to the pagans lands forever rigid with cold, where their gods, banished from the rest of the world, are wrongly supposed to rule.[158]

Daniel, as far as we know, had never been to either Germania or southern Europe, and he evidently failed to notice the logic-endangering hypocrisy of an Anglo-Saxon born on the edge of Dartmoor trying to persuade the inhabitants of central Germania that their climate was the result of God's displeasure. Yet the image had potency to Daniel's mind, or else he would not have employed it; and the fact that he described Germania from the point of view of a southern European accustomed to olive groves and vineyards suggests that his perception had been influenced, if indirectly, by classical tradition.

It is necessary briefly to mention here the preservation of Tacitus's *Germania* at the heart of Boniface's mission field, for it may have been one possible route of transmission of classical perceptions of Germania to the Anglo-Saxon missionary community. The text, having been lost to the wider world for centuries, was rediscovered in 1425 at the monastery of Hersfeld. Written at the end of the first century AD, the *Germania* was known to Cassiodorus in the 520s and, according to Rives, was also known in sixth-century Constantinople. Rudolf of Fulda quoted from it verbatim in the 860s, and the oldest known codex (now lost) was

---

[157] According to Gneuss, there is no evidence that Caesar's *De bello Gallico*, Seneca's essay *De Providentia*, or Tacitus's *Germania*, three of the four texts which mostly clearly portrayed the classical perception of Germania and Germani, were known in eighth-century England. H. Gneuss, *Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), pp. 149–84. Ogilvy claims that Aldhelm did, however, know of the fourth text, Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, as well as some other works of Seneca. J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597–1066* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1967), pp. 222–23, 240.

[158] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, pp. 27–28; 'Et cum ipsi, id est Christiani, fertiles terras unique et olei feraces ceterisque opibus habundantes possident provincias, ipsis autem, id est paganis, frigore semper rigentes terras cum eorum diis relinquerunt, in quibus iam tamen toto orbe pulsi falso regnare putantur': Tangl, ep. 23, p. 40, ll. 24–29.

written by this time, perhaps at Fulda itself.[159] Our knowledge of the dissemi-
nation of the text in the late classical and early medieval periods is extremely
cloudy, and the date of its arrival in Hessia before *c.* 860 is unknown. It is
conceivable that more than a century earlier Boniface, or one of his contacts, came
across the *Germania* in Rome and judged that it might be useful for the mission,
but this is hypothetical, for Boniface neither quotes from the text nor alludes to
any knowledge of it in his surviving writings, and we have no evidence that it was
even known in Rome at this time.[160]

Whether or not the *Germania* was known to the eighth-century missionaries,
both Gregory II and Gregory III described Boniface's mission in poetic terms
which seem to have played on the classical motif of Germania as a land of darkness
and shadow, and which Boniface would have recognized. Gregory II's description
was in a letter of 724 to Boniface: 'We foresaw to send you into the regions of the
west [*in partibus [H]esperiarum*] to illuminate the people of Germania who are

---

[159] Rives, *Tacitus: Germania*, pp. 67–68; M. Winterbottom, 'Tacitus', in *Texts and Trans-
missions: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds and L. G. Wilson (Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 406–11 (pp. 410–11); L. D. Reynolds and L. G. Wilson, *Scribes and
Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1991), p. 85.

[160] Boniface's description of the punishment of adulterous women in Old Saxony, included
in his letter of admonishment to King Æthelbald of Mercia in 746/47, bears some resemblance
to a passage in the *Germania*, but is not close enough to confirm direct influence. Tacitus related
that, among the Germani, an adulterous woman was shaved by her husband, stripped and then
flogged by him through the village (Tacitus, *Germania*, chap. 19, p. 47, ll. 7–11). Boniface stated
that any Old Saxon woman, married or unmarried, who had relations outside wedlock was hanged
and burned along with her *corruptor*; alternatively, she was stripped and flogged 'from village to
village' (de villa ad villam) by a troop of women (Tangl, ep. 73, p. 150, ll. 10–22). According to
Tacitus, the husband punished his adulterous wife; according to Boniface, both married and
unmarried women were punished along with their adulterous partners, and flogging was carried
out by the female community, not the husband. It is impossible to state that Boniface's account
indicates the influence of Tacitus, as opposed to some degree of cultural continuity in Germania
between the first and the eighth centuries. Boniface also praised the respect for marriage among
the Wends (*Uuinedi*), a generic term used by Germanic-speakers to describe neighbouring Slavs
(ibid., p. 150, ll. 22–27); Tacitus mentioned the *Veneti* and had nothing to say concerning their
morality (Tacitus, *Germania*, chap. 46, p. 61, ll. 20–26), but Boniface did have direct contact
with Slavs who had settled in Thuringia (Tangl, ep. 87, p. 200, ll. 16–21), just as he had firsthand
experience of Old Saxon culture. If he did not rely on Tacitus for his comment regarding the
Wends, he need not have used Tacitus to comment on the Old Saxons, and the differences in
his account suggest that he did not. This does not, of course, prove that he did not know the
*Germania*, merely suggests that he did not rely on it in this instance.

dwelling in the shadow of death.'[161] Gregory III's remarks were in a reply of 739 to a report of Boniface: '[God] has opened a door of mercy in those western regions [*in illis partibus [He]speriis*], a gate of mercy to the realization of the way of salvation.'[162] These two instances are the only times that *Hesperia* is alluded to in the letters of Boniface and Lul. Hesperia was the name given to the 'Land of the West' or 'Land of the Evening Star [*Hesperus*]' in classical poetry, specifically in the works of Virgil, who used Hesperia as a synonym for Italy numerous times in the *Aeneid*.[163] Virgil also invoked Hesperus, bringer of night and shadow, on one other occasion, in order to achieve cadence at the close of his final *Eclogue*:

> Let us rise; the shadow falls heavy on the singers;
> Heavy is the shadow of the juniper; the shadows hurt, too, the crops;
> Go home well-fed — Hesperus comes!—go, my flocks.[164]

In the densely wooded, half-imagined pastoral world of Virgil's *Eclogues*, shade and shadow were important poetic signifiers of mood.[165] The intentions of Popes Gregory II and Gregory III when they described Boniface's mission as being 'in the regions of the west' must have been largely poetic: Germania was, strictly speaking, north of Rome and east, not west, of the Rhine. More important than geographical precision were the deepening shadows and semi-mythical lands that the term *Hesperia* evoked.[166] Boniface was familiar with Virgil's *Aeneid*, from which he borrowed part of a line in the fifth of his *Enigmata*,[167] and, having been

---

[161] 'In partibus [H]esperiarum ad inluminationem Germaniae gentis in umbra mortis sedentis dirigere praevidimus': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 4–6.

[162] '[Deus] ianuam misericordiê et pietatis in illis partibus [He]speriis ad cognoscendam viam salutis ostium misericordiae aperuit': Tangl, ep. 45, p. 72, ll. 8–10.

[163] J. D. Reed, *Virgil's Gaze: Nation and Poetry in the 'Aeneid'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 7.

[164] Surgamus; solet esse gravis cantantibus umbra; | iuniperi gravis umbra; nocent et frugibus umbrae; |te domum saturae, venit Hesperus, ite capellae: Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–IV*, ed. by H. R. Fairclough, rev. by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), *Eclogue* 10, pp. 94–95.

[165] Wendell Clausen's commentary in Virgil, *Eclogues*, ed. and trans. by W. Clausen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. xxv–xxvi.

[166] See Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 149.

[167] Orchard cites the parallel of Boniface's line 'In qua *nec metas* aeui *nec tempora* clausit' with line 278 of Book I of the *Aeneid*: 'His ego *nec metas* rerum *nec tempora* pono'. Boniface, *Ænigmata Bonifatii*, p. 291; *Virgil*, ed. by Fairclough, p. 100; Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, p. 252.

educated in the circle of Aldhelm, he had probably also read the *Eclogues*.[168] Allusions to Hesperia would not have been lost on him.

The classical view of Germania as a land of darkness was both literal, owing to the dense forests and long winter nights of northern climes, and figurative, as a contrast to the light of Roman civilization. Pliny's debt to Virgil, archetypal advocate of Rome's self-ordained destiny to rule the known world, is obvious in the preface to Book XXVII of his *Naturalis historia*, where he comments that 'the Gods seem to have given the Romans as another light unto human affairs'.[169] Yet here the apparent similarity of the classical and Bonifatian perceptions of Germania reveals itself as superficial, and the contrast can help us better appreciate the importance of Germania as a literary and poetic construct in the letters of the eighth-century missionaries. In both the classical and the eighth-century traditions Germania was a dark and dangerous wilderness, mysterious, brooding, and hostile. But whereas in classical times this shadow was cast across the Rhine by the light of Roman civilization, in the eighth century, as is evident in the letters of Boniface, it was cast by the light of Christ.

A similar difference existed between the attitude of classical authors towards barbarians and the attitude of Boniface and his circle towards pagans. Tacitus, for example, rejoiced in the mutual destruction of barbarian tribes in Germania, for their endemic discord benefited Roman security.[170] Pliny, after the failure of Rome to subjugate the Chauci of northern Germania, soothed Roman pride by affirming that the Chauci had not so much preserved their own liberty — their

---

[168] Aldhelm cited the *Eclogues* in his *De metris* and *De pedum regulis*, and borrowed from them in his own verse (see Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, p. 219). It thus seems likely that the *Eclogues* formed part of the corpus of liberal learning in early eighth-century Wessex to which Boniface referred in his 716x17 letter to the monk Nithard, a letter which is itself full of Aldhelmian allusions to classical literature (Tangl, ep. 9, p. 5, ll. 28–29). Martin argues for the pervasive influence of classical poetry on formal Latin teaching in Anglo-Saxon monasteries: B. K. Martin, 'Aspects of Winter in Latin and Old English Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 68 (1969), 375–90 (pp. 389–90).

[169] '[Dei] Romanos velut alteram lucem dedisse rebus humanis videntur': Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*, VII: *Libri XXIV–XXVII*, ed. and trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), XXVII. 1. 3 (VII, 390–91).

[170] See Tacitus's account of a battle between the Bructeri and their neighbouring tribes: 'Super sexaginta milia non armis telisque Romanis, sed, quod magnificentius est, oblectationi oculisque ceciderunt. Maneat, quaeso, duretque gentibus, si non amor nostri, at certe odium sui, quando urgentibus imperii fatis nihil iam praestare fortuna maius potest quam hostium discordiam': Tacitus, *Germania*, chap. 33, p. 54, ll. 6–10.

humble, scraping existence was too miserable to be called that — as been reserved by Fortune for eternal punishment.[171] They could thus be abandoned to their fate, and there was no moral obligation on Rome to rescue them. Nor was it remotely desirable to endure the barbaric, uncultivated wilderness they called home. 'The world swarms with wild beasts', Lucretius wrote in the 50s BC, 'and is filled with restless terror through its groves, mighty mountains and deep forests. For the most part it is in our power to avoid these places.'[172]

Boniface and his companions, however, had a very different mandate. God 'willed that all men should be free',[173] and the conversion of the peoples of Germania was something that many missionaries strove for despite the hardships involved. In the letters, the poetic intensifiers *Germania* and *Germanic* served to heighten the trials and torments of Boniface and his companions, evoking a rich response in an audience attuned to their usage.[174] In much the same way, romanticized invocations of 'Darkest Africa', embellished with biblical metaphors of light and shadow, at once enticed and unsettled Victorian-era missionaries to that continent.[175] Yet there was more than the Great Commission to motivate the Anglo-Saxon missionary. The difference between the terms *exul* and *exul Germanicus*, at least regarding the impression made on an Anglo-Saxon audience, was the same as the difference between the terms *tempestates* and *tempestates Germanicae*, or *mare* and *mare Germanicum*. The adjectives were not added merely for the sake of geographical specificity, but because they carried powerful connotations that resonated especially with readers who located the primeval origins of their own *gens* in Germania itself. The Old Saxons and Anglo-Saxons were, as Boniface reminded his countrymen in a letter of *c*. 738, 'of one blood and one bone'.[176] The first appearance of Boniface's title *legatus Germanicus* is, in fact,

---

[171] Sallmann, 'Reserved for Eternal Punishment', pp. 126–27.

[172] '[I]ta ad satiatem terra ferarum | nunc etiam scatit et trepido terrore repleta est | per nemora ac montes magnos silvasque profundas; | quae loca vitandi plerumque est nostra potestas': Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, ed. and trans. by C. Bailey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), v, ll. 39–42, p. 434.

[173] '[Deus] vult omnes homines salvos fieri': I Timothy 2. 4; Tangl, ep. 21, p. 36, ll. 13–14; ep. 38, p. 63, ll. 24–25; ep. 46, p. 74, ll. 1–2; ep. 65, p. 138, ll. 2–3; ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 10–11.

[174] On the emotional impact of such choice words and expressions in Old English poems which dealt with themes of exile, see S. B. Greenfield, 'The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of "Exile" in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 200–06 (p. 205).

[175] L. Larosz, 'Constructing the Dark Continent: Metaphor as Geographic Representation of Africa', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 74 (1992), 105–15 (pp. 106–07).

[176] 'De uno sanguine et de uno osse': Tangl, ep. 46, p. 75, l. 6.

in the extraordinarily elaborate *intitulatio* of this letter, which he seems to have
been determined to disseminate as widely as possible:

> To all most reverend fellow bishops, to the venerable men clothed in the white of the
> priesthood, to deacons, clerics, prelates, indeed, of the flock of Christ, both abbots and
> abbesses, to monks humble before God, consecrated virgins devoted to God and the entire
> congregation of handmaidens of Christ, and in general to all God-fearing Catholics begot
> of the stock and race of the Angles, Boniface, also called Wynfreth, born of that same race,
> Germanic legate of the universal church and servant of the apostolic see, appointed
> archbishop for no merit of his own — greetings of most humble communion and sincere
> affection in Christ.[177]

Nowhere else in the surviving letters did Boniface remind his audience of his
Anglo-Saxon name, or place such emphasize on his own ethnicity. Both Bede and
Aldhelm saw Germania as the original homeland of the Anglo-Saxon *gens*,[178] and
Boniface would not have attempted to recall his compatriots to their bond of
kinship with the Old Saxons if he did not believe that the bond was widely felt,
at least among the higher clerical ranks. It is significant in this context that the
only preserved reply to Boniface's appeal is the enthusiastic response of Bishop
Torthelm of Leicester, who does not appear to have been among Boniface's fre-
quent correspondents.[179] If a copy of Boniface's letter was carried as far north as
Leicester, beyond the circle of his regular correspondents,[180] it suggests that Boni-
face had indeed instructed his messengers to carry (or copy and distribute) the
letter as widely as possible throughout the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

   Yet, as we have seen, the image of Germania evoked by Boniface and his
correspondents was scarcely intended to be positive. On the contrary, it appears

---

[177] 'Universis reverentissimis coepiscopis, venerabilibus presbiteratus candidatis gratia, diacon-
ibus, canonicis, clericis, vero gregi Christi prelatis abbatibus seu abbatissis, humillis et pro Deo
subditis monachis, consecratis et Deo devotis virginibus et cunctis consecratis ancillis Christi,
immo generaliter omnibus catholicis Deum timentibus de stirpe et prosapia Anglorum procreatis
eiusdem generis vernaculus universalis ecclesiae legatus Germanicus et servus sedis apostolice
Bonifacius qui et Uuynfrethus sine praerogativa meritorum nominatus archiepiscopus humillimae
commonionis et sincerissimae in Christo caritatis salutem': Tangl, ep. 46, p. 74, ll. 24–29.

[178] See Bede's comments on the origins of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in Germania in *HE*,
v. 9, p. 296, and Aldhelm's remark that he had been 'nourished in cradle of a Germanic people'
(Germanicae gentis cunabulis confotum): Aldhelm, *De metris*, p. 202, l. 5.

[179] Tangl, ep. 47, pp. 75–76. It is the only surviving letter of Bishop Torthelm to Boniface,
and its tone is formal rather than familiar.

[180] At this stage in his career, the only known Anglo-Saxon correspondent of Boniface
beyond the southern kingdoms is Bishop Pehthelm of Whithorn, whom he almost certainly knew
through West Saxon connections: according to Bede (*HE*, v. 18), Pehthelm had trained as a monk
with Aldhelm, most probably in Wessex. See Yorke, 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections'.

to have been derived from a mixture of Classical and biblical traditions that resulted in the portrayal of Germania as a hostile, forested wilderness inhabited by barbaric pagans who dwelled in a state of ignorance and spiritual captivity. We can witness the interplay of these traditions in the surviving letters of the missionaries, and thereby understand the reception that Boniface's title of *exul Germanicus* may have had by his Anglo-Saxon audience.

## Exile, Suffering, and Purpose

In Germania, the semi-mythical home of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, the missionaries endured their *peregrinatio*. We can now draw together the themes of exile, suffering, and Germania and consider their great importance to the literary representation of Boniface's mission in more detail. First of all, exile was an established theme of Anglo-Latin poetic composition long before Boniface arrived in Germania. During the abbacy of Aldhelm at Malmesbury (*c.* 672 to 706), his pupil Æthilwald sent him a poem 'concerning the exile of a journey across the sea' for correction.[181] Æthilwald's poem, which survives in the Vienna manuscript of the Bonifatian correspondence,[182] presents a heroic image of the exile upon which certain young Anglo-Saxon missionaries — not least Lul himself, as we shall soon see — may have modelled themselves:

> But you, forging on with the strenuous vigour of a renowned man, have defeated the fierce enemy with the celestial trophy of battle, you who spurned friends and fatherland to go to the earth of a foreign field.[183]

Although no Old English poems can be proven to have survived from the time of Boniface, vernacular poetry was being composed in a Christian context by figures such as Aldhelm and Caedmon by the late seventh century, and, in the opinion of Orchard, influenced the rhythmic and alliterative form of the contemporary Anglo-Latin poetry that does survive.[184] Later Old English poets tended to

---

[181] '[D]e transmarini [...] itineris peregrinatione'. Æthilwald refers to the poem in his letter to Aldhelm (Æthilwald, *Carmina rythmica II*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 528–33 (p. 497, ll. 3–5)). The poem itself also survives (ibid., pp. 528–33).

[182] *Carmina Rhythmica II*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 751, fol. 40.

[183] 'At vos, famosi viribus | Viri sudantes strennuis | Trucem vicistis tropeo | Hostem belli aethereo | Qui propinquos et patrias | Abspernantes peregrinas | Ignoti ruris cespites | Adistis cursu praepetes!': Æthilwald, *Carmina rythmica II*, p. 530, ll. 42–48.

[184] Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, pp. 45–54. C. Abram, 'Aldhelm and the Two Cultures of Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Literature Compass*, 4 (2007), pp. 1354–77, using the example

embellish the theme of exile greatly in their adaptations of biblical texts,[185] and the portrayal of exile is a central feature of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. These two thematically related poems survived in the Exeter Book, a manuscript from the second half of the tenth century,[186] although consensus dates their composition to the eighth or ninth centuries.[187] The language and poetic formulas of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* are, of course, very different from the Latin prose of Boniface and his correspondents, but they were the product of an entirely Christian milieu that, like the circle of Boniface, was heavily influenced by patristic tradition,[188] and strong thematic echoes appear that can help us better appreciate the resonance that motifs of exile had with a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience.[189]

of Aldhelm, has argued against the 'artificial barriers' sometimes placed between Old English and Anglo-Latin poetry by modern scholars.

[185] Greenfield, 'The Formulaic Expression', pp. 204–05; L. H. Frey, 'Exile and Elegy in Anglo-Saxon Epic Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 62 (1963), 293–302 (pp. 295–97).

[186] Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501, fols 8–130.

[187] There is no way to give a more precise date of composition, and the debate continues. Gordon suggested the ninth century, while Whitelock favoured the eighth century, specifically the time of Bede and Boniface, for *The Seafarer*. Most recently Orton has stated that the eighth and ninth centuries are possible, and the tenth century is unlikely. *The Seafarer*, ed. by I. L. Gordon (London: Methuen, 1960), pp. 27–32; D. Whitelock, 'The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', in *Essential Articles for the Study of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. by J. B. Bessinger and S. J. Kahrl (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1968), pp. 442–57 (p. 444); P. Orton, 'The Form and Structure of *The Seafarer*', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by Liuzza, pp. 353–80 (pp. 353–54).

[188] See G. V. Smithers, 'The Meaning of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*', *Medium Ævum*, 26. 3 (1957), 137–53 (p. 149); F. N. M. Diekstra, '*The Wanderer* 64b–72: The Passions of the Mind and the Cardinal Virtues', *Neophilogus*, 55 (1971), 73–88 (p. 86). The presence in *The Wanderer* of the pre-Christian concept of *wyrd* 'fate' does not, as Beaston has recently argued, constitute the poet's pining for a lost pagan past, for there is no reason to assume that the Anglo-Saxons considered belief in *wyrd* to be incompatible with Christian faith. L. Beaston, 'The Wanderer's Courage', *Neophilogus*, 89 (2005), 119–37 (p. 128). On the subordination of *wyrd* to God in Anglo-Saxon texts, see B. J. Timmer, 'Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry', *Neophilogus*, 26 (1941), 24–33; K. Lochrie, '*Wyrd* and the Limits of Human Understanding: A Thematic Sequence in the *Exeter Book*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 85 (1986), 323–31. On the comparable incorporation of the Old Saxon concept of *wurd* into the epic Gospel narrative of the *Heliand*, see G. R. Murphy, *The Saxon Saviour: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century 'Heliand'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 33–55.

[189] See J. Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, CSASE, 27 (1999), pp. 19–20; Schaefer, 'Two Women in Need of a Friend'; Cünnen, *Fictionale Nonnen-welten*, especially pp. 226–29.

In Anglo-Saxon society, exile was 'the ultimate in hardships'[190] and 'the epitome of misfortune'.[191] It entailed the abandonment, voluntary or not, of one's home and companions, hence of security and emotional support. The exile was an outcast, forced to dwell on the fringes of society, and for Anglo-Saxon poets this invariably meant crossing the sea. As noted above, the use of the sea as a symbol for the turbulence of human life was a long-established patristic tradition,[192] and scholars have also discussed the use of the sea by Anglo-Saxon poets as a metaphor for death and as a place of mystical absorption.[193] The sea, or more specifically travel across it, was part of the poetic paraphernalia of exile. Frey comments that 'the natural environment the Anglo-Saxon knew — windy headlands, chilly seas, and northern winters — provided the perfect background for human hardship'.[194] Perhaps the defining stylistic feature of exile in Anglo-Saxon poetry, according to Greenfield, was the description of physical movement from the homeland and the inevitable sense of displacement that followed.[195] We find such a description among the letters of Lul, who, having travelled from Wessex to Rome *c.* 738, wrote a florid, highly poeticized account of his journey to an abbess and nun in England (italics indicate borrowings from Aldhelm identified by Tangl):[196]

> *I confess to your charity*, that, after I forsook the renowned realm of British soil, touched, as I believe, by the healthy rebuke of divine piety, having abandoned the most bountiful island of my native home, which is *fortified on all sides by the dashing blue-green of the foaming sea*, aware of my weakness and recalling my wicked deeds, along with one company comprising almost all of the fellowship I had, carried, by the favour of Christ, across the crashing mountains of the seething sea, rejoicing *to have reached the edge* of this region, praising and offering vows, and by advancing to the borders of the blessed apostles on account of prayers subtracting the *immeasurable weight of my sins*, I readied myself to

[190] Frey, 'Exile and Elegy', p. 294.

[191] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), p. 102. See also R. E. Bjork, '*Sundor æt Rune*: The Voluntary Exile of the Wanderer', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by Liuzza, pp. 315–27 (p. 316).

[192] See above, pp. 253–57.

[193] G. H. Brown, 'An Iconographic Explanation of *The Wanderer*, lines 81b–82a', *Viator*, 9 (1978), 31–38. See also B. McGinn, 'Ocean and Desert as Symbols of Mystical Absorption in the Christian Tradition', *Journal of Religion*, 74 (1994), 155–81 (pp. 157–59).

[194] Frey, 'Exile and Elegy', p. 302.

[195] Greenfield, 'The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of Exile', p. 203.

[196] Lul's passage is stylistically modelled on a letter of Aldhelm describing his journey home from Ireland: Aldhelm, *Epistulae*, ep. 5, p. 489, ll. 7–10.

appear there; and I deserved to be alone in the calamity of this exile, deserted by just about all of my kinsmen, in the long *dream of peaceful sleepers*.[197]

Lul conjured an image of the choppy waters of the channel dashing against the rocky shoreline of Britain and described his perilous voyage across the 'crashing mountains of the seething sea', yet entirely ignored the weeks that he must have spent crossing Gaul and Italy before reaching Rome. According to the Anglo-Saxon concept of exile, crossing the sea, not the land, was what mattered, for without doing so one was not a true *peregrinus*.[198]

In the above letter Lul appears to have presented himself as the archetypal exile, who had, like the hero of Æthilwald's poem, 'spurned friends and fatherland to go to the earth of a foreign field'.[199] The Anglo-Saxons who assumed the mantle of exile were expected to assume the entire cultural construct, including hardship and suffering, a feature so amply illustrated in the letters of Boniface and Lul. Bjork has observed:

> Exile itself, as one constant tradition in the Anglo-Saxon world, can affirm that world and be as dearly clung to as the seemingly more positive aspects of life. Though perhaps the most intense and painful experience one can have within Anglo-Saxon society, exile is nonetheless an accepted (even expected) part of Anglo-Saxon life, a part that both the language and the culture accommodate.[200]

As far as the rhetoric of the letters is concerned, suffering was not a consequence of exile that should have discouraged a determined missionary.[201] The priest Wiehtberht, when he wrote to the monastic community of Glastonbury about his work on the Hessian-Saxon borderlands, did not seek to hide from them the hardships he faced. On the contrary, he presented them as an integral part of the missionary experience and declared himself undaunted in his task:

---

[197] '*Fateor caritati vestrae*, postquam Brittanice telluris inclita sceptra divine pietatis ammonitione ut reor salubri tactus fugiens deserui relictaque fecundissima natalis patriae insula, quam *glauca spumantis maris cerula* infligentia scopolosis marginibus undique vallant, fragilitatis meae conscius et scelerum meorum aliquatenus tunc reminiscens una cum propinquitatis meae propemodum caterva Christo favente ferventis ingruentibus pelagi molibus transvectus huius regionis *marginem applicuisse* gratulans votorum compos tripudiabam liminibusque beatorum apostolorum orationis causa demendi innumera *piaculorum meorum pondera* pergendo me satagebam presentare ibique cunctis adfinitatis meae propinquis propemodum longo quietis *somno sopitis* solus in huius exilii calamitate et orbatus merui': Tangl, ep. 98, p. 219, ll. 6–18.

[198] Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 152–53.

[199] Æthilwald, *Carmina rythmica II*, p. 530, ll. 45–48.

[200] Bjork, '*Sundor æt Rune*', p. 316.

[201] Whitelock, 'The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', p. 444.

> For almighty God in his mercy and through your merits has given success to our labours, arduous and perilous though they be in almost every way, hunger and thirst and cold and attacks by the heathen.[202]

Lul wrote a letter to congratulate Boniface's pupil Gregory on his appointment as Abbot of Utrecht around 750, a period which coincided with renewed violence in the Saxon borderlands. He apologized that he was unable to visit him in person 'on account of the multitude of tribulations which we continually endure, praise be to God'.[203] Adversity was not a sign of God's disapproval; on the contrary, overcoming such adversity was the very proof of his support.

Between 769 and 786[204] the nun Berthgyth wrote at least three letters to her brother Balthard in which she lamented her monastic isolation in terms that have invited direct comparison with the Old English poem *The Wife's Lament*.[205] Berthgyth had arrived in Thuringia with the nun Cynehild, her mother, and Lul's aunt,[206] and remained there after her mother died. The plaintive rhetoric of the first two letters, as Tangl and Orchard have noted, is heavily indebted to Aldhelm and Scripture,[207] whereas the third, the most intense and heartfelt of her pleas for companionship, is conspicuously free of literary allusions:

> Why, my brother, have you been so neglectful, so slow in coming? Why do you refuse to realize that I am all alone in this world, and that no other brother may visit me, nor any other relative? And if for that reason — because I have been hitherto unable to, though my mind has earnestly desired it — you weigh out some act of kindness, nonetheless you must forget the duties of love and kinship by being persuaded otherwise by someone else or changing your mind. Oh brother, oh my brother, how can you punish the mind of my faithful smallness by your absence, while day and night I wail and pine in sorrow?

[202] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 152; 'Deus enim omnipotens per misericordiam suam ac merita vestra sufficientiam operis nostri bonam perficit, licet valde sit periculosum ac laboriosum pene in omne re, in fame et siti, in algore et incursione paganorum inter se degere': Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 23–26.

[203] 'Festinatio autem ad te veniendi propter multiplicem tribulationem, quam uigiter Deo gratias sustinemus, mihi undique denegata est': Tangl, ep. 92, p. 211, ll. 24–26.

[204] Tangl, although he leaves the letters of Berthgyth undated in his edition, is confident that her brother Balthard is to be identified with the first abbot of Hersfeld, installed by Lul *c*. 769: Tangl, ep. 147, p. 284 n. 2. The *terminus ante quem* of the letter is the compilation of the *collectio communis* before the death of Lul in 786.

[205] Schaefer, 'Two Women in Need of a Friend'; Dronke, *Women Writers*, pp. 30–35.

[206] Otloh, *Vitae Bonifatii auctore Otloho libri duo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii*, ed. by Levison, pp. 111–217 (chap. 25, p. 138, ll. 1–9).

[207] See Tangl's notes on ep. 147, pp. 284–85, and ep. 148, pp. 285–87; Orchard, 'Old Sources, New Resources', pp. 36–37.

> Surely you now know that I place no other living person before you? But aye, I cannot tell you all this in a letter. Now I know for sure that you do not care at all about my smallness.[208]

There were situations, it seems, in which literary formulas, indeed the medium of letter-writing itself, failed to capture the depth of suffering faced by those who felt isolated from friends and family. We have already seen the varied imagery that the missionaries had to hand when they desired to depict adversity, and how such depictions played on the themes of *peregrinatio*, Germania, and the unruly ocean of earthly life. The missionaries were equally ready, however, to offer formulaic consolation and reassurance when it was required, and this served to balance the discourse of suffering.[209]

Klein, in a linguistic analysis of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, concluded that the essential feature of admirable Anglo-Saxon character was to grasp and maintain a clear purpose rather than to respond to the vagaries of experience, the unknowable vicissitudes of *wyrd*. A strong mind ensured the dominance of volition, and a wise and happy man, at least in the opinion of the author of *The Wanderer*, directed his purpose towards God in all things.[210] It is telling that the one fragment of Old English to survive in the correspondence of Boniface and Lul comprises two short verses, written by an unknown monk to a novice missionary, on precisely this theme:

> I hear about you that you want to start a journey; I urge you not to abandon it. Carry through, I say, what you begin! Remember the Saxon saying: 'The lazy man often puts off glory and any kind of victory; that man dies alone'. Although I know of no such tendency in you, it must not be done in this case; but direct yourself to where the harvest is with God's assistance.[211]

---

[208] 'Quid est, frater mi, quod tam longum tempus intermisisti, quod venire tardasti? Quare non vis cogitare, quo ego sola in hac terra et nullus alius frater visitet me neque propinquorum aliquis ad me veniet? Et si ideo facis, quia adhuc nihil potui, secundum quod mens mea diligenter voluisset, aliquid beneficii inpendere, tamen caritatis atque adfinitatis iura nullo alio suadente aut mens tua mutando debes obliviscere. O frater, o frater mi, cur potes mentem parvitatis meae adsiduae merore fletu atque tristitia die noctuque caritatis tuae absentia adfligere? Nonne pro certo scies, quia viventium omnium nullum alium propono tuae caritati? Ecce non possum omnia per litteras tibi indicare. Iam ego certum teneo, quod tibi cura non est de mea parvitate': Tangl, ep. 143, p. 282, ll. 20–33.

[209] For example, Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, l. 21, to p. 132, l. 6; ep. 64, p. 136, ll. 19–26; ep. 94, pp. 214–15; ep. 111, p. 239, ll. 8–18.

[210] W. F. Klein, 'Purpose and the "Poetics" of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*', in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard*, ed. by L. E. Nicholson and D. W. Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 208–23 (p. 212).

[211] 'Audio de te, quod iter vis incipere; ortor, ut non deficeris. Eia fac, quo incipisti. Memento Saxonicum verbum: Oft dædlada dôme foreldit, | Sigisîtha gahvêm; suuyltit thî âna. Sed tamen

This monk who had pledged himself to join the mission in Germania was not to hesitate or deviate from his course, but to place himself unreservedly in the service of God. He must have had contact with others active in the mission, and perhaps knew of the dramatic literary discourse that pitched light against darkness, Christ against Satan, amidst the stormy sea of the Germanic peoples. If so, it is no small wonder that he hesitated before committing himself to a *peregrinatio* from which, in all likelihood, he would never return. Yet suffering was the very essence of serving Christ in exile, and was thus not something to shrink back from, but to embrace. His advisor did not turn to a biblical or patristic source for the crucial words of inspiration, but to a *Saxonicum verbum*, a 'Saxon saying', which does not appear to have had any explicit Christian connotations, and could equally have been used to encourage a young secular adventurer. This supports the notion that the missionaries conceived of their *peregrinatio* in terms that, in many ways, would have been familiar to a lay Anglo-Saxon who chose (or was forced) to embark on a length sojourn abroad.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen how the shared cultural understanding of the missionary community led it to represent the mission to outside audiences. We have identified a clear difference in the nature of discourse between Boniface and the papacy on the one hand, and Boniface and his Anglo-Saxon contacts on the other. Each audience shared the symbolic language of biblical and patristic tradition, but the theme of exile, in particular the suffering it entailed, was one that resonated only between Anglo-Saxons.

In pursuing mission, the missionaries were making manifest the powerful literary and biblical construct of the *peregrinus* who abandoned home and family for the love of Christ. Yet the innovation of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries was to combine the Irish tradition of *peregrinatio* with the simple command of the Great Commission — 'go, therefore, and preach to all peoples' — and the strong sense of affinity they had for the peoples of Germania, especially the Old Saxons, whose conversion forever eluded Boniface. The resulting image of the missionary as an *exul Germanicus* was a potent one. In the next chapter we shall consider, as far as possible, the trials and experiences of those missionaries who embarked on their great *peregrinatio*, and then come to consider the relationship between the pursuit of the mission and its literary conceptualization.

tale quid in te haud scio, non est hic operandum; sed tende, ubi messis est Deo adiuvante': Tangl, ep. 146, p. 283, l. 25, to p. 284, l. 2.

# Experiencing the Mission

By this point we have explored several aspects of Boniface's Hessian mission. We have examined the West Saxon environment in which he spent the first forty years of his life, and which taught him the importance of winning the support of secular rulers, and of loyalty to Rome and to the episcopal model of ecclesiastical government. We have seen how Hessia *c.* 721 was an area of long-standing Frankish ambitions, one which the Franks held under their control but which had not been systematically Christianized prior to Boniface's arrival. We have also constructed a critical chronology of the mission from the early evangelization of the 720s and Boniface's promotion to archbishop in 732, to the expansion of his mission in Saxony from 738/39, the troubled attempts to consolidate during 740s, and the disastrous loss of territory before his death in 754. Finally, we examined the representation of the mission in the rich collection of letters written by or to Boniface and his fellow missionaries. These letters demonstrated a particularly strong tendency among the Anglo-Saxon correspondents to present the missionary as a suffering exile in the pagan darkness of Germania.

We now have the opportunity to examine the mission itself in detail, after which we can relate the literary discourse between the missionaries and their Anglo-Saxon supporters to the real difficulties and challenges that were encountered during the mission. This chapter will proceed in four main stages. First we shall examine the surviving historical sources in order to gain an impression of the nature of the paganism encountered in the district by Boniface, and consider this in light of the toponymical and topographical evidence for pre-Christian sacrality within the Hessian landscape.

Second, we shall contrast this pagan landscape with the Christian landscape with which Boniface attempted to supplant it. Charter and topographical sources

give us the opportunity to reconstruct a network of major Bonifatian church foundations in Hessia, which, as we shall see, was reminiscent of the minster system of the Solent. There is also some evidence that Boniface established certain chapels and churches in direct confrontation with sites of pagan worship.

The third section will concern the material support base which Boniface established to maintain his missionaries and their churches. This involved negotiations at various levels of society, from the highest echelons of the Frankish elite to the local potentates without whose support Boniface could not have attempted to Christianize the ordinary people. Equally important in this respect were Boniface's dealings and frequent conflicts with powerful members of the Frankish church outside Hessia, who were the cause of many of his greatest anxieties and frustrations.

Finally, having reconstructed these highly varied aspects of the mission, we can consider how Boniface set about his task of converting the population of Hessia. This will include discussing the organization of missionary parties, the nature of pre- and post-baptismal teaching methods within an episcopal framework, and finally the reasons why Boniface, despite his best efforts, failed in his deepest ambition to convert the Saxons.

## The Sacred Pagan Landscape of Hessia

### Historical Evidence for Hessian Paganism

In this book we have so far looked upon eighth-century Hessia as outsiders — not only from our own perspective, but from the perspective of Franks and Anglo-Saxons to whom Hessia was also a foreign land. We have followed the missionaries away from the familiar and towards the strange, from their Christian homeland to the pagan wilderness. We have explored the mentality of these wanderers as preserved in their letters and attempted to glimpse the world through their eyes. It is a regrettable truth that the historical sources all but force this bias upon us, and that even what we know about contemporary paganism comes to us through a frequently hostile Christian filter which was more concerned with using literary models to define and clarify 'orthodox' Christianity than with providing accurate descriptions of living custom.[1]

---

[1] I. Wood, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Century', in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. by G. Ausenda

There is also the danger, alluded to in the discussion of 'Germanic' culture in the previous chapter,[2] of painting 'Germanic paganism' with a brush so broad that it obscures regional variations in belief and custom.[3] Before continuing, I will declare my assumption that Hessian paganism *c.* 721, aside from the degree to which it was influenced by Frankish Christianity, did not differ in fundamental respects from Saxon paganism. There doubtless were differences between the regions, for example the seemingly exclusive Saxon worship of the god Saxnôt.[4] On the other hand, both Hessians and Saxons worshipped Woden and Thunaer — related to the Odin and Thor of Norse mythology—and, as we saw in Chapter 4, both practised cremation as a common form of burial rite in contrast to the region to the south, where it was much less widespread.[5]

Contemporary references to paganism by Christians, as well as being in Latin rather than the vernacular, are condemning in tone and often highly formulaic and derivative in content, and this provokes a serious question as to how far they were based on actual experience or knowledge of pagan behaviour. Consider the general letter that Pope Gregory III wrote to the entire population of Boniface's mission field *c.* 738:

> Therefore abstain and keep yourselves from every kind of heathen practice, and not yourselves only but all who are subject to you. Reject absolutely all divination, fortune-telling, sacrifices to the dead, prophecies in groves or by fountains, amulets, incantations, sorcery (that is, wicked enchantments), and all those sacrilegious practices which used to go on in your country.[6]

---

(Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 253–79 (pp. 254–55); J. Palmer, 'Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World', *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (2007), 402–25 (pp. 410–25).

[2] See Chapter 6, above, pp. 257–60.

[3] Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, pp. 173–74.

[4] Saxnôt was one of the three gods renounced in the Old Saxon baptismal vows, along with Thunaer and Woden. See Anon., *Interrogationes et responsiones baptismales*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by Boretius, p. 222. He also appears across the North Sea as Seaxnet, the *Stammvater* of the South Saxon royal dynasty, which indicates the existence of his cult among the pre-conversion elite of that kingdom. Because he does not appear in non-Saxon contexts, and because of the etymological link in the *Sax-* element of his name, Simek suggests that Saxnôt was a god peculiar to Saxon tribes (*Religion und Mythologie*, p. 114); see also Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 98–102; Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', p. 303. On the Saxon baptismal vows, see below, pp. 376–80.

[5] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 168–76.

[6] '[A]bstinete et prohibete vosmet ipsos ab omni cultu paganorum, non tantum vosmet ipsos corrigentes, karissimi, set et subditos vestros. Divinos autem vel sortilegos, sacrificia mortuorum

Divination, fortune-telling, prophecies, incantations — this is less a carefully considered list of genuine pagan activities tailored to the specific context of eighth-century Germania than a recitation of literary cliché. These were the sorts of nefarious activities which all pagans got up to at groves and springs, as any good Christian had known since the times of Augustine and Caesarius of Arles.[7] We see the same phrases echoed in the curious list of superstitions and pagan customs derived from Boniface's mission field in the early 740s known as the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*,[8] as well as in the decrees of the Frankish synod of 742 behind which Boniface was a prime mover,[9] in the sermons attributed to Boniface,[10] and in later sources associated with Charlemagne's campaigns in Saxony.[11] Such expressions were part of a centuries-old Christian literary discourse in which every educated cleric could take part, however little time he or she had actually spent treading the grass of pagan groves. It is thus unsurprising that the portrayal of pagan activity reached its most fantastical proportions in hagiography, which was even further removed from real paganism than letters and conciliar decrees.[12]

seu lucorum vel fontium auguria vel filacteria et incantatores et veneficos, id est maleficos, et observationes sacrilegas, quae in vestris finibus fieri solebant': Tangl, ep. 43, p. 69, ll. 10–16.

[7] W. E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 1–2. See Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 412–13; C. S. Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th ser., 66 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 77–78.

[8] Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by Boretius, pp. 222–23: 'De fontibus sacrificiorum', chap. 11; 'De incantationibus', chap. 12; 'De divinis vel sortilegis', chap. 14. On the date and origin of the *Indiculus superstitionum*, see A. Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*', in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychology*, ed. by H. Hasquin (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984), pp. 9–26.

[9] 'Decremivus [...] ut populus Dei paganias non faciat, sed ut omnes spurcitias gentilitatis abiciat et respuat, sive sacrificia mortuorum sive sortilegos vel divinos sive filacteria et auguria sive incantationes sive hostias immolaticias': Tangl, ep. 56, p. 100, ll. 21–26.

[10] Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, sermon 6. For a full discussion, see below, pp. 380–87.

[11] 'Si quis ad fontes aut arbores vel lucos votum fecerit aut aliquit more gentilium obtulerit et ad honorem daemonum commederet, si nobilis fuerit solidos sexaginta, si ingenuus triginta, si litus quindecim': Anon., *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, p. 69, chap. 21, ll. 39–41.

[12] Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 408–09, 414–16.

Yet we should not be too quick to dismiss this literary stereotype as having no basis in reality, or to assume, because its contents are so vague and formulaic, that all those who adopted it had little experience of authentic pagans. It was less a piece of learned fiction than, to borrow Peter Brown's phrase, a 'facilitating simplification' within a grander narrative of Christianity's ongoing struggle with the forces of Satan.[13] The practice of divination and incantation at natural sites such as groves, rocks, and bodies of water, often involving some form of sacrifice or libation, appears to have been a very common feature of pre-Christian European religion in general, as Dowden has discussed:

> So the Franks of Gregory of Tours, the Saxons of Rudolf of Fulda and the Slavs of Helmold, Priest of Bozova, all display, in Helmold's words, 'the manifold error of groves, springs and other religious practices among them' and the Christians, whether they knew it or not, were right to be indiscriminate on these topics.[14]

One reason why Christian writers could so consistently and convincingly repeat the crude clichés of paganism, in other words, is that on some level — an unsophisticated, prejudiced level, to be sure — these clichés were true. Pope Gregory's letter, which was very carefully addressed to specific peoples of the mission field,[15] must have meant something to its audience, however few actually read or heard it. Similarly, when the sixth pseudo-Bonifatian sermon proclaims that the worst sins of all are not murder, adultery, and sodomy, but 'sacrifices over the bodies of the dead and over the graves themselves, or divination, or amulets, or what they sacrifice on cliffs and at springs and groves to Jupiter or Mercury or other gods of the pagans, which are all evil spirits, and numerous other things too many to recount',[16] we can almost hear the feverish desperation of the preacher for whom these clichés have become very real indeed: as real, perhaps, as the 'witches and werewolves' which apparently still stalked the credulous minds of the audience of sermon 15.[17]

---

[13] P. Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. x.

[14] K. Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 153.

[15] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 197–200.

[16] Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, sermon 6.

[17] '[S]trigas et fictos lupos': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, sermon 15. Classical Latin *striga* or *strix* refers to a type of supernatural creature, a metamorphic screeching bat that fed on human flesh and blood and is one root of the later medieval superstitions surrounding witches (cf. Romanian *striga*, Albanian *shtriga*, and Italian *strega*, 'witch'). See S. G. Oliphant, 'The Story of

Such contemporary Christian sources, however dreary and repetitive their condemnations may be, are at least consistent on this point: Hessian and Saxon paganism was focused on water, wood, and rock. Indeed, nothing symbolizes better than the Oak of Jupiter itself the depth to which paganism was rooted in and nourished by the natural landscape of Hessia. Fortunately we also have some direct, if fragmentary, historical evidence of the form and nature of eighth-century paganism in central Germania that takes us beyond the springs and groves of Christian cliché. This includes the two short pieces of Old High German verse known as the Merseburg Incantations, and the little reliable evidence for pagan behaviour that can be gleaned from contemporary Bonifatian and Frankish condemnations of it.

The Merseburg Incantations were added in an early or mid tenth-century hand to a single folio of an early ninth-century Fulda homiletic manuscript which also contains a manual explaining the rituals of Mass and baptism to a clerical audience.[18] Since the two incantations, uniquely among Old High German charms, bear no apparent trace of Christian influence, they most likely date from the conversion period.[19] The pre-Christian nature of these charms and their

the *Strix*: Ancient', *Transactions an Proceedings of the American Philological Society*, 44 (1913), 133–49. In the first Saxon Capitulary the *strix* is described as a cannibal, and male or female persons suspected of being *striges* were, allegedly according to Saxon custom, burned to death and themselves eaten. Anon., *Capitulatio*, chap. 6, p. 68, l. 33, to p. 69, l. 2. On medieval Christian perceptions of werewolves, see K. Dennis, 'Fictus Lupus: The Werewolf in Christian Thought', *Classical Folia*, 30 (1976), 57–80.

[18] The incantations are found in Merseburg Domkapitel, Cod. 136, fol. 85ʳ; the clerical manual is fols 1–21. The most recent printed edition and English translation of the incantations is by P. Giangrosso, 'The Merseburg Charms', in *Medieval Germany: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. M. Jeep (London: Garland, 2001), pp. 112–14, in which she reproduces the edition of E. von Steinmeyer, *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916).

[19] The charms and the Merseburg manuscript have been extensively discussed. See in particular J. Grimm, 'Über zwei entdeckte Gedichte aus der Zeit der deutschen Heidentums', in *Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* (Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1824), pp. 1–14; B. Murdoch, 'But Did They Work? Interpreting the Old High German Merseburg Charms in their Medieval Context', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 89 (1988), 358–69; K. L. Miller, 'The Old High German and Old Saxon Charms: Text, Commentary and Critical Bibliography' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St Louis, 1963); K. Hauck, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Bilddarstellungen des zweiten Merseburger Spruchs als Zugang zu Heiligtum und Opfer', in *Vorgeschichtlicher Heiligtümer und Opferplätze in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, ed. by H. Jankuhn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 297–319; H. Beck and M. Lundgreen, 'Merseburger Zaubersprüche',

possible origin in the region of Fulda allow us an invaluable, if brief, glimpse into the form of paganism encountered by Boniface in central Germania.

In the first Merseburg charm, a group of female supernatural beings called *idisi* are invoked in order to free captives from their bonds and impede an enemy army. The text and literal translation offered here are from Giangrosso's edition:

> Once sat women [*idisi*]*,* they sat here then there.
> Some fastened bonds, some impeded an army,
> some unravelled fetters:
> escape the bonds, flee the enemy! .H.[20]

Simek compares these *idisi* to Valkyries, who were also protectors of warriors in battle, and notes that the name appears to be related to Norse *dísir*, which was used as a general term for supernatural females, including Valkyries and *nornor*, who had a wide variety of functions. They were believed to preside over births and to prophesy the fate of the newborn infant, and acted as protectors or betrayers in battle, either binding the enemy or leading those who invoked them to their deaths.[21] The first Merseburg Incantation suggests that the *idisi* of conversion-period Germania at least fulfilled the roles of guardians in battle and liberators of captives.

The second Merseburg Incantation features Woden and a collection of other deities as each attempts in turn to heal a foal's damaged foot.

> Phol and Woden rode to the woods.
> Then Balder's foal wrenched its foot.
> Then did Sinthgunt enchant it, Sunna her sister,
> then did Freya enchant it, Fulla her sister,
> then did Woden enchant it, as well he could:
> if a bone-wrenching, if a blood-wrenching, if a limb-wrenching:
> bone to bone, blood to blood, limb to limb, as if bonded![22]

---

in *RGA*, XIX (2001), 601–05; B. Bischoff, 'Paläographische Fragen deutscher Denkmäler der Karolingerzeit', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 5 (1971), 101–34 (p. 111).

[20] 'Eiris sazun idisi, sazun hera duoder. | suma hapt heptidun, suma heri lezidun, | suma clubodun umbi cuoniouuidi | insprinc haptbandun, inuar uigandun! .H.': text and trans. in Giangrosso, 'The Merseburg Charms', p. 112.

[21] H.-P. Naumann, 'Disen', in *RGA*, IV (1984), 494–97; E. Brate, 'Disen', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung*, 13 (1911/12), 143–52; R. Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. by A. Hall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), p. 62; Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, pp. 118–24.

[22] 'Phol ende Uuodan uuorun zi holza. | du uuart demo Balderes uuolon sin uuoz birenkit. | thu biguol en Sinthgunt Sunna era suister, | thu biguol en Friia Uolla era suister, | thu biguol en

In Norse mythology, Woden, like Christ, was a god of the heavens, raised above mortals on high mountains where he sat and regarded the world below. He was the grantor of victory and the god of fury (his name is related to OHG *wuot*, 'rage'), the object of a cult of spiritual ecstacy and shamanism.[23] The second Merseburg Incantation clearly indicates his associations with healing and horses, which are also features of the Icelandic Odin, and the Hessian custom of eating horse flesh that was condemned by Gregory III in a reply to a report of Boniface in 732 may have originally been connected in some way with Woden worship.[24] Horses are known to have played an occasional role in Saxon funerary rituals, as evidenced by the horse burials at the cemeteries of Liebenau and Eschwege-Niederhone.[25]

Another aspect of Woden's cult, at least in southern Saxony, may have been human sacrifice. In the same letter of 732, the Pope commanded Boniface to punish as murderers those Christians who sold slaves across the borderlands destined for human sacrifice, although he did not state to which particular god such sacrifices were offered.[26] This cannot merely be a formulaic demonization of pagan behaviour, for the immorality of human sacrifice was not Boniface's primary concern; rather, he desired to clarify the specific punishment for those merchants who had sold Christian slaves knowing that they were to be sacrificed. We should not, however, assume from this particular instance that human sacrifice was widespread in pagan areas, despite the additional reference to it in the Saxon Capitulary of 782.[27] It may be an example of what Carver has termed the 'bow-wave' effect, where certain early medieval pagan customs appear to have been devised or intensified in hostile reaction to the advance of Christianity: at the eleventh-century pagan shrine of Gamla Uppsala, he suggests, 'the sacrificial

---

Uuodan so he uuola conda: | sose benrenki, sose bluotrenki, sose lidirenki: | ben zi bena, bluot zi bluoda, sose gelimida sin': text and trans. in Giangrosso, 'The Merseburg Charms', pp. 112–13.

[23] Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, pp. 242–43.

[24] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 24–28.

[25] On Eschwege, see R. Gensen, 'Ein Adelsgrab aus Eschwege-Niederhone', *FH*, 9/10 (1969/70), 92–100 (p. 93); K. Sippel, 'Ein merowingisches Kammergrab mit Pferdegeschirr aus Eschwege, Werra-Meißner-Kreis (Hessen)', *Germania*, 65 (1987), 135–58. On Liebenau, F.-R. Herrmann, 'Ein frühmittelalterlicher Friedhof bei Liebenau', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 145–47.

[26] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 18–23. See also Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, p. 243.

[27] 'Si quis hominem diabolo sacrificaverit et in hostiam more paganorum daemonibus obtulerit, morte moriatur': Anon., *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, p. 69, chap. 9, ll. 8–9.

practices' reported by Adam of Bremen 'were not so much discovered by the Christians as provoked by them'.[28] One reason to suspect that this was the case in Saxony in the 730s is that, according to Gregory's letter, baptized Christians were apparently being specifically acquired via the slave trade to be offered for sacrifice. The choice of Christian sacrificial victims by the Saxons would have been seen as highly provocative by the Frankish rulers to the south, and thus it was inherently confrontational and reactionary.

Of the six other deities named in the second Merseburg Incantation, Balder, Friia, and possibly Uolla also appear in Norse mythology. Balder is almost certainly to be equated with Baldr, the second son of Odin.[29] Friia's namesake Freyja, meanwhile, was the most powerful of the goddesses in the Norse pantheon.[30] Uolla, who is Friia's sister in the Merseburg charm, might have developed into Fulla in Norse mythology, a minor figure who appears as handmaid to the goddess Frigg.[31] The first two lines of the incantation suggest that Phol may have been a nickname for Balder,[32] but the identities of Sinthgunt and Sunna are entirely unknown; Simek suspects an association of the goddess Sunna with the sun.[33]

Other Christian sources also provide clear evidence for the worship of the god referred to as 'Jupiter' in the *Vita Bonifatii*,[34] the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*,[35] the sixth pseudo-Bonifatian sermon,[36] and in two letters of Pope Gregory III.[37] Jupiter in these texts is the *translatio Romana* of the Hessian-Saxon god Thunaer (OHG Donar, OE Thunor, ON Thor), who appears alongside

---

[28] Carver, 'Why That?', p. 7.

[29] K. Schier, 'Balder', in *RGA*, II (1976), 2–7; Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, pp. 26–30.

[30] E. C. Polomé, 'Freyr', in *RGA*, IX (1976), 587–94; Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, pp. 89–91.

[31] Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, p. 115.

[32] Beck and Lundgreen, 'Merseburger Zaubersprüche', p. 602.

[33] Simek, *Religion und Mythologie*, p. 115.

[34] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, ll. 11–14.

[35] Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, p. 223, chap. 8, l. 20.

[36] Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, sermon 6.

[37] The first reference to Jupiter is in a letter of 732: 'Nam et eos, qui se dubitant fuisse baptizatos a non vel qui a presbitero Iovi mactanti et immolaticias carnes vescenti, ut baptizentur, precipimus': Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 5–7. The second reference appears in the Herford letter of *c.* 741: 'Ceterum, dilectissime, arbores illas, quas incole colunt, monemus ut succidantur, sicut subvertisti arborem, que Jovis appellabatur, que ab incolis venerabatur': Honselmann, 'Der Brief Gregors III', p. 319.

Woden and Saxnôt in the late eighth-century vernacular Saxon baptismal vows.[38]
Adam of Bremen, writing in the late eleventh century, equated the Thor wor-
shipped at Uppsala with Jupiter and attributed to him power over the weather:
'"Thor", they say, "rules in the sky, and governs thunder and lightning, winds
and rain showers, fair weather and crops" [...]. Thor, however, appears to
resemble Jupiter with his sceptre.'[39] The derivation of Thunaer's name from
proto-Germanic *Þunraz, 'thunder', suggests an association with thunder and
the natural forces of the sky, and it seems possible that these attributes, together
with his grove-centred worship, fundamentally signified his connection with
strength, the earth, and fertility.[40] We might thus surmise that public veneration
of Thunaer, assuming he was held to control the weather and influence crops, was
an important feature of the agricultural economy of Hessia, and the presence of
his cult in the fertile, densely settled Eder basin may be indicative of this.

     But merely to list the hobbies and interests of a god does not get us far. Aside
from Pope Gregory's single reference to priests who had offered sacrifices to

---

[38] Anon., *Interrogationes et responsiones baptismales.* Palmer, 'Defining Paganism', pp. 411–
12, expresses scepticism of the universal validity of the Thunaer/Jupiter and Woden/Mercury
*interpretatio Romana*. The Anglo-Saxon god Thunor and the Norse god Thor were explicitly
equated with Jupiter in Latin sources only from the tenth century onwards, but Simek, *Dictionary
of Northern Mythology*, p. 74, suspects that this *interpretatio Romana* had its origins as early as the
first century. Tacitus called Mercury the highest god of the Germani (Tacitus, *Germania*, chap.
9, p. 42), while Jonas of Bobbio, writing *c.* 641/42, equated Woden with Mercury in his *Vita
Columbani*, I, chap. 27, p. 213, ll. 18–19: 'Illi aiunt se Deo suo Vodano nomine, quem Mercurium,
ut illi aiunt, autumant, velle litare.' There is, furthermore, a clear distinction in usage between our
contemporary vernacular and Latin sources. Only Woden and other vernacular gods are named
in the second Merseburg Incantation, and Woden and Thunaer are the two principle gods
denounced in the vernacular baptismal rite. As we shall see shortly, the gods' vernacular names also
appear in the Hessian-Saxon place-names *Gudensberg* (recorded as *Guodenesberch* in 1119) and
*Donnersberg* (*Thuneresberch* in 1100). Conversely, Mercury and Jupiter are twice mentioned
together in the Latin *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 8, l. 20, and in the sixth pseudo-Bonifatian
sermon. It seems most logical to accept that the *interpretatio Romana* in question was understood
and followed by Latin authors throughout the early medieval period, and that the Oak of Jupiter
was in fact dedicated to Thunaer. (Mysteriously, Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 152,
is alone in translating *robor Iovis* as 'the Oak of Woden'.)

[39] '"Thor," inquiunt, "presidet in aere, qui tonitrus et fulmina, ventos ymbresque, serena et
fruges gubernat" [...] Thor autem cum sceptro Iovem simulare videtur': Adam of Bremen,
*Adams Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. by B. Schmeidler, MGH SS rer. Germ.,
2 (1917), p. 258, l. 5, to p. 259, l. 1.

[40] H. Beck, 'Donar-Þorr', in *RGA*, VI (1986), 1–7; Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*,
pp. 316–25.

Jupiter,[41] none of our contemporary Latin sources tells us much specific about the nature of Thunaer's cult. If this is lamentable in the case of Thunaer, it is no less true of the other regional gods who have survived in little more than name — or of those, for that matter, who have not survived at all. We have no idea whether or not the worship of a particular god was restricted by age, sex, or social status; we cannot be sure how ritual traditions were structured around the universal cycles of day, month, and year, let alone the human transitions of birth, puberty, and death; we know little about the duties and taboos to which people adhered with a conservative devotion that brought upon them the distant condemnation of Rome. The social reality of Hessian paganism, in other words, is virtually lost to us.

Such crumbs as we have fall from the table of the unknown writer who compiled the *Indiculus superstitionum*, probably in the early 740s in connection with Boniface's earliest reform councils, probably with reference to customs observed in or close to the pagan borderlands.[42] The author seems to have assembled a list of thirty beliefs and traditions that comprise a curious mixture of cliché and oddity, of the self-explanatory and the opaque. One entry reads 'on the *spurcales* in February', which Boretius related to *Sporkelmonat*, 'piglet month', an old folk name for February in parts of northern Germany.[43] This pagan winter custom possibly involved communal feasting on pig, while the Latin rendition *spurcales* may also contain a sneering echo of *spurcus*, 'unclean, impure'.[44] There is a reference to *nimidas*, forest groves where unspecified rituals were carried out,[45] and to the kindling of *nodfyr*,[46] 'need-fire', which was also explicitly condemned in the church council of 742 as 'those sacrilegious fires which they call *niedfeor*'.[47] 'Need-fire' refers to the custom, widespread across rural Europe until modern times, of lighting large bonfires at particular times of year in rituals of purification. It is still common today in parts of northern Hesse for villages to construct a bonfire on Easter Eve, the professed aim being to banish the evil spirits of winter;

---

[41] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 5–7.

[42] Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*; Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme'; Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, 481–751* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 178–80.

[43] 'De spurcalibus in Februario': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 3 and p. 223 n. 2.

[44] Dowden, *European Paganism*, p. 153.

[45] 'De sacris silvarum quae nimidas vocant': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 6.

[46] 'De igno fricato de ligno id est nordfyr': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 15.

[47] '[I]llos sacrilegos ignes, quos niedfeor vocant': Tangl, ep. 56, p. 100, ll. 29–30.

James Frazer recorded an early twentieth-century example at Volkmarsen, just 9 kilometres from Boniface's minster at Schützeberg, which still retained traces of ritual complexity that may well have had medieval roots:

> At Volkmarsen and other places in Hesse the people used to observe which way the wind blew the flames, and then sowed flax seed in that direction, confident that it would grow well. Brands taken from the bonfires preserve houses from being struck by lightning; and the ashes increase the fertility of the fields, protect them from mice, and mixed with the drinking-water of cattle make the animals thrive and ensure them against plague. As the flames die down, young and old leap over them, and cattle are sometimes driven through the smouldering embers.[48]

Such events involved the entire community and were focal moments in the agricultural calendar, not to mention a tangled web of traditional rituals and superstitions. Even if the *nodfyr* of the eighth century resembled this later manifestation only superficially, it becomes apparent why Boniface was so anxious to bring it under the control of the church, or better yet to eradicate it completely, and why it was the only custom important enough to be denounced by its vernacular name in the council of 742.

Other headings in the *Indiculus superstitionum* refer to augeries taken from the dung or snorting of birds, horses, and oxen;[49] rituals involving animal brains;[50] prophecies made at hearths;[51] the use of storms, horns, and shells for unspecified purposes;[52] wooden hands and feet, perhaps left at sacred sites as healing tokens by the sick;[53] and idols made of bread and cloth.[54] There is a glimpse of syncretism in the phrase 'the bed straw which good people call St Mary's',[55] an early reference

---

[48] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 627. See also J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4th edn, 3 vols (Berlin: Dümmlers, 1875–78), II, 502–09.

[49] 'De auguriis vel avium vel equorum vel bovum stercora vel sternutationes': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 13.

[50] 'De cerebro animalium': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 16.

[51] 'De observatione paganorum in foco vel in incoatione rei alicuius': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 17.

[52] 'De tempestatibus et cornibus et cocleis': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 22.

[53] 'De ligneis pedibus vel manibus pagano ritu': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 29.

[54] 'De simulacro de consparsa farina'; 'De simulacris de pannis factis': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chaps 26 and 27.

[55] 'De petendo quod boni vocant sanctae Mariae': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 19; see p. 223 n. 11 on the suggested emendation of *petendo* to *petenstro*, 'bed straw'.

to the common medieval custom, evidently pre-Christian in origin, of placing bundles of special herbs named after the Virgin Mary in the cribs of infants as a talisman against sickness and evil spirits.[56] Aside from the *nodfyr*, other public rituals included the procession of 'idols' around fields[57] and some kind of race, perhaps held in honour of the goddess Freya, which involved the tearing of clothes and shoes.[58]

The intended audience of the *Indiculus superstitionum*, assuming there even was one, must have been much better informed on these matters than ourselves, for many of the references are so brief as to be virtually inexplicable when viewed alone.[59] Yet the overall impression we gain from the source is of a society that had developed a multifaceted array of rituals intended as a shield against the hardships and dangers of an unpredictable world — so multifaceted, in fact, that we ought not to be surprised if Latin authors chose to subsume them all within the sturdy, simplistic old stereotypes of 'augeries' and 'incantations'. This complexity is apparent in the pagan obsession with all forms of divination and foretelling, in the wide variety of rituals devoted to appeasing the gods, and most of all in those customs which unified the community and allowed them to believe that they could, after all, resist and perhaps even defeat the malevolent forces around them: the purifying rituals of fire which anchored them to the annual cycle of the earth, the digging of enchanted ditches around their farms as a defence against invisible enemies,[60] even crying at the moon to ensure its victory during an eclipse.[61]

The threads of these superstitions were deeply entwined within a broader tapestry of gods and legends. The vagaries of history have left us with only a few frayed threads and some isolated scraps of parchment that must be viewed through a dim and distorting Christian lens; not enough to reconstruct the whole. The detail is forever lost to us, but if we arrange what we have across the bare bones of the Hessian landscape, perhaps we shall find that there are still new shapes and contours to be discovered.

---

[56] H. E. Davidson, *Roles of the Northern Goddess* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 155.

[57] 'De simulacro quod per campos portant': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 28.

[58] 'De pagano cursu quem yrias nominant scisis pannis vel calciamenti': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 24; see p. 223 n. 17 on the possible emendation of the unknown word *yrias* to *frias*, genitive singular of the name *Freya*.

[59] For example, 'those things which they do upon rocks' (De hiis quae faciunt super petras): Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 7.

[60] 'De sulcis circa villas': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 23. Boretius, ibid., p. 223 n. 16, suggests that these ditches were intended as a defence against witches.

[61] 'De lunae defectione quae dicunt "vince luna!"': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, chap. 21.

## Some Comments on the Study of 'Sacred' Place-Names

There is a venerable tradition in Anglo-Saxon studies of using place-names as evidence of pre-Christian religious practice. Ernst Philippson, Eilert Ekwall, Bruce Dickins, and Frank Stenton can be credited with the earliest dedicated studies in this area,[62] beginning a line of enquiry that has been followed especially by Margaret Gelling,[63] David Wilson,[64] Audrey Meaney,[65] and, most recently, Sarah Semple.[66] Semple's work in particular has been inspired by Stefan Brink's topographical and toponymic studies of sites of pagan ritual significance in Scandinavia.[67] Although there is a strong German tradition of place-name studies, the specific field of pagan place-names has not yet received the systematic attention it has in England and Scandinavia. The parallels between Anglo-Saxon and German material have long been known and commented on by, for example, Stenton, who observed that place-name elements in Germany derived from

[62] E. Philippson, *Germanisches Heidentum bei den Angelsachsen* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1929); E. Ekwall, 'Some Notes on English Place-Names Containing Names of Heathen Deities', *Englische Studien*, 70 (1935), 55–59; B. Dickins, 'English Names and Old English Heathenism', *Essays and Studies*, 19 (1934), 148–60; F. Stenton, 'The Historical Bearing of Place-Names Studies: Anglo-Saxon Heathenism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (1941), 1–24.

[63] M. Gelling, 'Place-Names and Anglo-Saxon Paganism', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 8 (1961), 7–25; M. Gelling, 'Further Thoughts on Pagan Place-Names', in *Otium et Negotium: Studies in Onomatology and Library Science Presented to Olof von Feilitzen*, ed. by F. Sandgren (Stockholm: Kungliga Biblioteket, 1973), pp. 109–28 (repr. in *Place-Name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and Scandinavian Settlements*, ed. by K. Cameron (Nottingham: English Place-Names Society, 1975), pp. 99–114); M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (London: Dent, 1978), pp. 154–59.

[64] D. Wilson, 'A Note on *Hearg* and *Weoh* as Place-Name Elements Representing Different Types of Pagan Saxon Worship Sites', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 4 (1985), 179–83; D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 6–16.

[65] A. Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries, Place-Names and Hundred Meeting Places', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), 29–42.

[66] S. Semple, 'Defining the Old English *Hearg*: A Preliminary Archaeological and Topographic Examination of *Hearg* Place-Names and their Hinterlands', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), 364–85.

[67] S. Brink, 'Political and Social Structures in Early Scandinavia II: Aspects of Space and Territoriality — the Settlement District', *Tor*, 29 (1997), 389–437; S. Brink, 'Mythologising Landscape: Place and Space of Cult and Myth', in *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23.12.2001*, ed. by M. Stausberg (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 76–112.

*harah/harug*, the OHG cognate to OE *hearg*, 'temple', were extremely rare, while those derived from OHG *alah*, 'temple, shrine', cognate to OE *ealh*, were much more common.[68] German place-names with possibly religious etymologies were noted by Ernst Förstermann and discussed by Edward Schröder and Adolf Bach,[69] but place-name studies in general, particularly those with a focus on Hesse, have tended to be more concerned with philology and questions of ethnic identity and settlement history.[70]

The foundation of place-name studies, as Stenton observed, is 'the collection of early spellings',[71] for without these it is impossible to be confident of the antiquity of any surviving form. This is amply illustrated in the Hessian material: the name of Altenstädt, for example, which lies 17 kilometres north of Fritzlar, is unusual in that its first element is derived from *alah*, 'shrine, temple', as proven by an 831 reference to *Alahstat*.[72] Far more typical of this name type is Altenstädt near Frankfurt, which is recorded 750x802 as *Altunstat*, where *Altun-* is derived from either *alt*, 'old', or the personal name *Alto*.[73] Without such early references it is often impossible to distinguish between identical modern name types with very different etymologies.

Most of the settlement place-names cited in this section have sufficiently early attestations to allow reasonable confidence in their etymology. The same cannot be said of the names of topographical features such as hills, fields, or streams, which were far less likely to be recorded in charters or literary texts. Modern German *Teufel*, 'devil', for instance, frequently appears in the names of

---

[68] Stenton, 'The Historical Bearing of Place-Names Studies', p. 11.

[69] E. Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, 3 vols (Bonn: Hanstein, 1900–13), II, pt I; E. Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kunde deutscher Personen- und Ortsnamen* (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1938), pp. 195–200; Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, II, pt I, 362–70.

[70] There is no German equivalent of the English Place-Names Society. The most useful printed source for early attestations of place-names in Hesse is Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, although he restricts himself to the earliest forms and brief etymologies of place-names recorded before 1200. The LAGIS (Landesgeschichtliches Informationssystem) website, operated by the provincial government body responsible for Hesse's cultural heritage, offers a useful online database of cultural information which includes a list of early place-name citations for individual settlements: <http://web.uni-marburg.de/hlgl/lagis/hiolex_xs.html> [accessed August 2010].

[71] Stenton, 'The Historical Bearing of Place-Names Studies', p. 3.

[72] *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis*, ed. by E. Dronke (Kassel: Fischer,1850; repr. Aalen: Zeller, 1962) (henceforth *CdF*), no. 483, p. 212; Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 150.

[73] *UBF*, no. 344, p. 440; Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 152.

topographical features across Germany. Examples in Hessia include such forms as *Teufelswiesen*, 'devil's meadow', and *Teufelstück*, 'devil's piece', but such micronyms are very rarely recorded in medieval sources. Although Bach believed that some such field names might have originated in the conversion period,[74] and allowing for the fact that the derivation of *Teufel* from OHG *tiofal* is undisputed, the extreme rarity of premodern references makes determining their antiquity all but impossible.

This is very unsecure territory for toponymics, and in order to steady ourselves it is necessary to spread the weight as far as possible: in other words, we must identify and account for potentially significant patterns within the corpus as a whole rather than putting our faith in individual examples. This is equally true for place-names such as Petersberg or Priesterberg, whose explicitly Christian elements may have been coined any time after the conversion period instead of during it. In more general terms, we must be cautious of looking too hard for something that may not be there. Friedhelm Debus cautions that scientific place-name research ought to be fundamentally sceptical of mythological etymologies,[75] and there are numerous examples of authors who have gone too far in their quest to discover the names of ancient gods or temples buried within the place-names of Hessia.[76]

---

[74] Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, II, pt I, 368.

[75] Debus, 'Zur Gliederung und Schichtung der nordhessischen Ortsnamen', p. 57.

[76] See Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 87, where he derives the place-names *Züschen* and *Dissen* in central Hessia from the god Ziu (OE Tiw); Züschen, first attested 826x76 as *Tuischinun*, is more likely a simplex from OHG *zwisgen*, 'between', with reference to the hills which surround it on all sides, while more likely etymologies for Dissen, attested 1061 as *Dusinun*, include *\*duz*, 'rushing spring', and *dis*, 'burial mound'. Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 228. C. Morgenstern, *Naturdenkmale im Landkreis Kassel* (Kassel: Landkreis Kassel, 1990), p. 22, states that the natural rock formation of Ziegenrück near Naumburg is named after Ziu. In this case an origin in OHG *ziga*, 'goat', and *ruggi*, 'back' (here meaning 'ridge') would give *zigen-ruggi*, 'goat's ridge', a reference to the precipitous nature of the formation, and is to be preferred. Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 145, erroneously gave the earliest occurrence of the place-name *Dorla*, which lies between Fritzlar and Gudensberg, as *Thurisloun*, finding its roots in OHG *durs-loh*, 'demon/giant grove'. Although Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 87, acknowledges that *Thurisloun* is now known to refer to the deserted medieval village of Dorslo near Eresburg, he retains its (apparently correct) etymology for Dorla; the earliest occurrence of Dorla, however, is *Dorlon* in 987 (Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 228), which cannot be etymologically linked to *durs*. Both Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 154, and Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 87, following W. Arnold, *Ansiedlungen und Wanderungen deutscher Stämme, zumeist nach hessischen Ortsnamen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1881), p. 67, also derive the place-name *Fritzlar* from OHG *fridu*, 'peace', suggesting that it denotes its sanctified status,

We should also be wary of inferring too much from a simple place-name. Elements meaning 'temple', 'shrine', or 'church' are relatively unambiguous indicators of a sacred social function, but we know too little about paganism in general to say much about how pre-Christian shrines were used. Theophorous place-names, that is place-names which include the name of a deity, are even harder to interpret. For example, does the name *Gudensberg*, meaning 'Woden's hill', refer to a former cult devoted to the god, or merely to stories and traditions which associated the hill with him? Similarly, was a hill bearing the name of St Peter once the site of a church which bore that dedication, or was it merely owned at some point by a church of St Peter? Was a stream originally called *holy* because it was sacred to Christians, or because it was sacred to pagans? We must bear these questions in mind throughout the discussion.

## Central Hessia

The extremely high concentration of pre-Christian religious activity in the Fritzlar basin has long been commented on (Map 11). Bach called it an 'ancient holy district',[77] Schlesinger a 'cult landscape',[78] and Demandt also remarked on the proliferation of ritual sites.[79] There is evidence for ritual activity as early as the

---

but a root in the personal name *Frid(i)* is preferable. See H. Tiefenbach, etymological contribution to 'Fritzlar', in *RGA*, X (1998), 87–89. In northern Hessia, Jakob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, I, 138, saw a reference to Woden in the hill name *Gudenberg*, but the first element *Guden* is more likely the singular genitive of the personal name *Gudo*. M. Hederich, *Zierenberg in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962), p. 166, follows Grimm's judgement regarding Gudenberg; he also sees Woden in the name *Odenberg* (see below), which is in fact derived from the personal name *Odo*, suggests that the place-name *Zierenberg*, first attested in 1298 as *Thirberg* (Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 536), is derived from the god Ziu rather than OHG *tior*, 'animal', and finds elves (modern German *Elfen*) in the natural rock formation known as the Helfensteine, which Werner Guth informs me is most likely derived from the abbreviated personal name *Helfo* (personal communication, 26 June 2009). In a previous article, 'Sacred Landscapes and the Conversion of Eighth-Century Hessia', *Landscapes*, 9. 2 (2009), 1–25, I suggested that the hill name *Heidekopf*, near Geismar, included the OHG element *heidan*, 'heathen'. While this remains an etymological possibility, the more mundane and plausible OHG root *heida*, 'heath', is to be preferred. It also seems more probable that the name of Bosenberg, a hill immediately north of Hasungen, is derived from the personal name *Boso* rather than OHG *bôsa*.

[77] Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, II, pt I, 409.

[78] W. Schlesinger, *Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1963), II, 161.

[79] Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 87.

Map 11. Central Hessia in the eighth century. Note especially the regular arrangement of eleventh-century mother churches around the archdeacon's seat at Fritzlar.

Neolithic, when humans first settled in the area, through the Bronze Age and Iron Age into Roman times and the conversion period. Notable prehistoric monuments include five standing stones at Großenritte, Guntershausen, Haldorf, Maden, and Werkel, which appear to be regularly arranged, separated from one another by approximately 5 kilometres, in a curve between the southern edge of Kassel and Fritzlar/Geismar. There are also two Neolithic chambered tombs near Züschen and Metze, and Iron Age cremation cemeteries near Maden and in the Riederwald, 3 kilometres north of Wichdorf.[80]

With the exceptions of Geismar and Maden, which do appear to have been the focus of religious cults from at least the first century,[81] this continuity of sacrality relates to the district as a whole rather than to individual sites. To an extent this can be explained by the character of the lower Schwalm, Eder, and Fulda basin as a natural focus of agriculture, settlement, and long-distance communication routes.

---

[80] For an overview of these and other archaeological sites in the Fritzlar district with references to further literature, see *Der Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, ed. by Herrmann; for a broader discussion, Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, pp. 48–59.

[81] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 132–37.

Geology has also created a landscape of striking uniqueness. Coming from the thick, claustrophobic forests and valleys of the surrounding regions, the Fritzlar basin feel vast and open, a wide, flat vale encircled by a ring of distant hills. The eye is caught by a handful of peaks that rise within the basin itself, isolated and discordant as though dropped there from the sky. These are in fact massive pockets of volcanic basalt, the black rock twisted and cooled into weird shapes of thrusting spires, cliffs, and platforms, exposed over millennia of erosion and stubbornly resistant to creeping plant growth.

One such outcrop towers over the village of Maden, where the highest medieval court of Hessia met until the thirteenth century,[82] and which was very likely one of the major Hessian centres of law and religious ritual long before that (Fig. 20). On the Feast of the Ascension it used to be customary for locals to climb the Maderstein, as the outcrop is called, in order to dance and collect herbs believed to hold healing and protective properties. A view of the roads and field boundaries around the village (see Map 7, p. 135) shows how it lies in the middle of a coherent circle just over 2 kilometres in diameter, bounded by the river Goldbach to the west and south, and by the hills of Gudensberg, Lamsberg, and Obernberg to the north and east, with boundaries and tracks radiating like spokes from the centre. No other village in the district has a remotely comparable field system. The antiquity and importance of the settlement is also attested by its early appearance as *Mathanon* in a Hersfeld charter of *c*. 800 known as the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*; this material be discussed in detail below,[83] but here it will suffice to say that Boniface seems to have been granted an estate at Maden during his lifetime. The thirteenth-century court of Maden did not meet in the village itself, but on a low rise called *Mader Heide* (heath) at the very edge of the circular boundary. It is not clear for how long the court had been meeting at this spot, or if it had been transferred at some point from the centre of Maden.

Immediately to the north of Maden, rising some 100 metres from the earth, is the large hill of Gudensberg, first attested in 1119 as *Guodenesberch* (Fig. 21).[84] The derivation of *Gudens* from OHG genitive *Wodenes* is universally accepted,[85]

[82] Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, pp. 168, 191.

[83] See below, pp. 356–70.

[84] Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 200.

[85] Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 363; Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 200. The mutation of the initial *w-* into a *g-* is a well-attested linguistic phenomenon; see E. Christmann, 'Der Wandel von *Wodensberg* zu *Gudensberg*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 67 (1944), 362–68; Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, pp. 553–54.

Fig. 20. Mader Stein seen from the west, dominating the village of Maden.



Fig. 21. Gudensberg seen from the east, showing a basalt outcrop named after the god Wodan.

and this strongly suggests that his cult was in some way associated with the assembly place at Maden. On the opposite side of Gudensberg, at the foot of Odenberg, is the deserted medieval village of Unseligendissen, attested in 1307 as *Unselgenhusen*.[86] The name includes the OHG element *unsâlîg*, 'unholy', and was interpreted by Arnold as referring to a pagan burial ground.[87]

There are many local folktales surrounding Odenberg which were first recorded in the middle of the nineteenth century by Karl Lynker.[88] He published numerous variations of similar stories which appear to share certain common motifs, most notably that of a king and his army who long ago fled into the hill after a terrible battle, and every seven years briefly emerge as a ghostly horde. The king is often identified as Karl der Große, that is, Charlemagne (sometimes replaced by 'Karlquintes', the Habsburg Emperor Charles V) and is usually depicted as riding a white horse. One story describes how Charlemagne was galloping past Odenberg when his mount caught its hoof on a rock; the rock slipped loose and a bright, clear stream gushed forth, providing enough drinking water for Charlemagne and his entire army.[89]

The antiquity of the folktale is of course impossible to determine, and similar stories can be found in many regions. The miraculous appearance of springs is also a stock motif in Christian hagiography, and we need not go far to find an example: Willibald relates a story about a group who were surveying the site of Boniface's martyrdom at Dokkum with the intention of building a church when one of their horses' front legs fell into the earth. When the horse was pulled out, a spring of extraordinary sweetness erupted from the earth.[90] Given the proximity of Odenberg to Gudensberg, however, we would be justified in calling to mind the second Merseburg Incantation, which contains both Woden and a stumbling horse, as well as the common association of natural springs with pagan deities.[91] One is brought to wonder whether these folktales retain faint echoes of even older, pre-Christian stories,[92] and whether Willibald seized upon the reported miracle at

---

[86] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 91.

[87] Arnold, *Ansiedlungen und Wanderungen*, p. 131.

[88] Lynker, *Deutsche Sagen*, pp. 3–11.

[89] Lynker, *Deutsche Sagen*, pp. 4–5.

[90] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 9, pp. 56–57.

[91] See above, pp. 280–91.

[92] Karl Kollmann, seeking to rehabilitate folk mythology as a usable historical source after its ideological abuse by nineteenth- and twentieth-century German nationalists, has argued that some

Dokkum in part because it directly subverted the association of natural springs with paganism.

From Maden, the physical, political, and religious heart of pre-conversion Hessia, we expand our view across central Hessia. Thanks to Willibald's account, there is no doubt that a second major shrine existed at Geismar in 721, and that it contained an oak dedicated to Thunaer. Place-name evidence also supports what the textual sources tell us. As discussed in Chapter 4, Geismar, 'the gushing pool', was probably the site of religious activity centred on a natural mineral spring since at least the Roman period.[93] In 1350 the stream that runs through Geismar was called *Heilgenborn*,[94] from the OHG *heilag*, whose meaning of both 'holy' and 'health-giving' illustrates how closely the two notions were related: good health came inherently from the gods, and its sources were to be venerated accordingly. The spring itself is today called the *Donarquelle*, 'Thunaer's spring', although the antiquity of this name is unknown. The micronym *Heiligental*, 'holy valley', is also attested immediately north of Geismar between 1277 and 1286.[95]

Given this concentration of place-name evidence, it is perhaps not surprising that we have rare historical confirmation of a shrine at Geismar. The precise physical location of the Oak of Jupiter is much less certain. Willibald's statement in the *Vita Bonifatii* that it stood 'in the place called *Geismar*'[96] does not mean that the shrine was within the excavated eighth-century settlement itself as opposed to being on its outskirts or simply nearby. Willibald reported that Boniface used the wood of the oak to built an oratory to St Peter,[97] which since at least the fifteenth century has tended to be identified with Boniface's earliest foundation at Fritzlar, 2 kilometres to the west, and still is by most modern historians.[98] If the oratory was the precursor to the monastic community at

---

Hessian folk legends contain certain motifs that may be of considerable antiquity ('Sagen als Quellen der Regionalgeschichte', *ZHG*, 105 (2000), 201–10).

[93] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 132–37.

[94] Guth, 'Ortswüstungen und andere wüste Siedelstellen', pp. 66–70; Küther, *Historiches Ortslexikon*, p. 263.

[95] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 221.

[96] '[I]n loco qui dicitur Gaesmere': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, l. 13.

[97] 'Tunc autem summae sanctitatis antistes, consilio inito cum fratribus, ligneum ex supradictae arboris metallo oratorium construxit eamque in honore sancti Petri apostoli dedicavit': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, l. 26, to p. 32, l. 2.

[98] See Wand, *Die Büraburg*, p. 42 n. 271a. Modern scholars who identify the church at Fritzlar with the Geismar oratory include Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 206; Padberg,

Fritzlar, however, it is curious that Willibald did not mention this, instead implying that Fritzlar was only founded when Boniface built a stone church there in 732.[99]

Parsons, arguing that 'it is [...] inherently unlikely that [Boniface] would have dissipated the psychological impact of the symbolic conquest of pagandom by building the chapel on another site', has contended that Fritzlar, not Geismar, was also the location of the original pagan shrine.[100] His observation that Boniface would probably have built his oratory on the site of the pagan shrine is logical and is a valid interpretation of Willibald's account; yet moving both shrine and oratory to Fritzlar hardly tackles the problem that Willibald associates the place with neither. Brendow and Kulick's argument that Willibald's *Gaesmere* denoted a large area which encompassed Fritzlar is contradicted by Willibald's own use of *Frideslar* to locate the church of 732.[101] An oft-cited piece of evidence is the dedication of the church at Fritzlar to St Peter, but since St Boniface seems to have also dedicated churches to St Peter at Schützeberg, Gensungen, Mardorf-Berge, and Maden, this argument does not carry much weight.[102]

Jestädt, also assuming that Boniface's oratory directly replaced the shrine, lent credence to a local tradition, first recorded in 1841, that the shrine was located on Johanneskirchenkopf ('the peak of St John's church'), a low hill at the southeast end of the Langerwald.[103] The rise overlooks Geismar from a distance of 3 kilometres and is on the ancient route, now a rarely used forest track, which ran along the crest of the Langerwald between Fritzlar and Eresburg. It was formerly the site of a village called *Hayn*, from OHG *hagan*, 'grove, clearing', which was deserted by 1433, and a church referred to in 1564 as *Hainskirche*. 'Johanneskirche' could be a malapropism from this name, and thus the original dedication

*Bonifatius*, pp. 40–41; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 148; Schwind, 'Fritzlar', p. 72; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 152; Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 122.

[99] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 35, l. 11.

[100] Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments', p. 292.

[101] V. Brendow and J. Kulick, *Die Johanneskirche bei Züschen: Führungsblatt zu der Wüstung auf dem Johanneskirchenkopf bei Züschen, Stadt Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 23 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpfege Hessen), pp. 2–3.

[102] See below, pp. 331–41.

[103] W. Jestädt, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Fritzlar: Festschrift zum 1200jährigen Bestehen der Stadt Fritzlar, 724–1924* (Fritzlar: self-published by Jubiläumsausschusses der Stadt Fritzlar, 1924), pp. 44–46; see also K. Demandt, *Quellen zur Rechtsgeschichte der Stadt Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, Veröffentliche des historischen Kommissions für Hessen und Waldeck, 13. 3 (Marburg: Elwert, 1939), p. 1 n. 1; O. Vug, 'Die Schanzen in Hessen', *ZHG*, 25 (1890), 55–137 (p. 120).

Fig. 22. Ancient oak in Reinhardswald. This tree is perhaps
reminiscent of the 'Oak of Jupiter' felled at Geismar.

is uncertain.[104] It is plausible that Willibald used the phrase 'in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere' to refer to a hill overlooking the settlement, and also plausible that a settlement established on the site of a former sacred grove might attract the simple name *Hagan*, but there is a lack of conclusive evidence for Jestädt's theory, to which Wand subscribes only with the greatest caution.[105] Although there have been reports of prehistoric cremation urns found on the hill,[106] limited excavations on the site of the deserted village and ruined church have so far recovered no ceramic evidence older than the twelfth century.[107]

There remains the third alternative that the location of the Oak of Jupiter, which Willibald claims was 'of extraordinary size' (Fig. 22),[108] was determined by a quirk of nature rather than by human intent, and was located in a clearing or pasture somewhere near Geismar that was frequented for no other reason. After its destruction, the location of both former shrine and replacement oratory may eventually have been forgotten. This explanation is less unlikely than Fritzlar and no more unlikely that Johanneskirchenkopf, and perhaps the best course is to remain in a state of conscious ignorance as to the precise location of the Geismar shrine.

*Heiligenberg*, 'holy mountain', is a fairly common place-name which in many cases clearly derives from a period of church ownership, not from the existence of a pre-Christian sacred site.[109] There are two examples in central Hessia, however, which do appear to relate to pagan sacrality. The first is 8 kilometres north of Fritzlar on the road to Weidelsburg. On the southern side of the summit is a sandstone cliff called *Ziegenrück*, situated 2 to 3 metres from a house-sized boulder known as *Riesenstein*, 'giant stone' (Fig. 23). Local historian Klaus Albrecht has observed that the gap between the boulder and the cliff shares its south-east alignment with the rising sun of the winter solstice (21 December), and the cliff appears to have been artificially cut back in order to emphasize this natural phenomenon. Evidence of further carving on the flat top of the Riesenstein and the presence of rune-like inscriptions on the cliff clearly demonstrate the

[104] Brendow and Kulick, *Die Johanneskirche bei Züschen*, p. 2.

[105] Wand, *Die Büraburg*, pp. 41–42.

[106] Vug, 'Die Schanzen in Hessen', p. 120.

[107] Brendow and Kulick, *Die Johanneskirche bei Züschen*, p. 7.

[108] '[M]irae magnitudinis': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, l. 11.

[109] Kollmann, 'Sagen als Quellen', p. 206. There are at least six Heiligenbergs between the Fulda and Werra which probably result from the extremely extensive land holdings of the medieval monasteries of Fulda and Hersfeld in the area.

Fig. 23. The Riesenstein at Heiligenberg (right)
and the artificially carved cliff of Ziegenrück (left).

ritual importance of the site in prehistory, while place-name evidence suggests that it retained sacred significance into the conversion period. Aside from the name *Heiligenberg*, a pair of nineteenth-century fields on the northern side of the hill bore the names *unter dem Wichberg* and *auf dem Wichberg*. Wichberg is derived from OHG *wih*, 'sacred', and *berg*, 'hill, mountain', and Debus suggests that *Wichberg* was the original name of the hill, supplanted in the conversion period by Heiligenberg and surviving only in the two field names.[110] The flat-topped Riesenstein, thanks to its physical prominence and its special relationship with the solar calendar, may thus have been among those sacrificial sites repeatedly condemned by the Christian Church during Boniface's mission.

The second Heiligenberg, attested in 1186 as *Heilingenberg*,[111] is 12 kilometres east of Fritzlar, rising 200 metres above the opposite bank of the Eder and overlooking the main route between Fritzlar and Erfurt. At the summit of the hill is a basalt outcrop which gives outstanding views across the Fritzlar basin (Fig. 24; the round tower on top of the outcrop is a nineteenth-century construction). This has also been frequently suggested as a site of prehistoric religious ritual, a notion which gains some support both from the name *Heiligenberg* and the existence of an early medieval chapel dedicated to All Saints at the peak.[112] The examples of Mader Stein, Gudensberg, and the two Heiligenbergs indicate that elevated outcrops were particular focal points of pre-Christian religious ritual. To these we might tentatively add the hill on the main road north from Fritzlar called *Wartberg*, whose older name is preserved in the village of Kirchberg, 'church hill', at its foot (Fig. 25). The church of Kirchberg, as we shall see, was likely founded during Boniface's mission, and may have been intended to supplant a pagan religious site on the rocky peak of the hill.

Such elevated sites, while they may have been important for specific rituals at particular times of the year — winter solstice at the Riesenstein, for example — were also among the less accessible spots of the inhabited landscape. Their remoteness from human settlement and closeness to the natural forces of the heavens may indeed have been part of their appeal. Other sacred sites, meanwhile, lay in the populated valleys, often on much-frequented transit routes.

[110] F. Debus, 'Ortsnamen des Kreises Wolfhagen', in *Heimatbuch Wolfhager Land*, I, ed. by Pädagogischer Arbeitskreis Wolfhagen (Wolfhagen: Papier-Wolf, 1966), pp. 18–25 (p. 22). Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, pp. 198–99, discusses two similar cases where an OHG 'sacred' place-name is accompanied by a secondary *heilig-* name.

[111] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 217.

[112] G. Landau, 'Der Heiligenberg', in *ZHG*, 8 (1860), 77–85.

Fig. 24. Heiligenberg, near Gensungen, showing the basalt outcrop at the peak.



Fig. 25. Kirchberg seen from the south. The village to the left of the hill was the site of an early church.

Fig. 26. Wichdorf, 'the holy settlement', seen from the south.

The spring at Geismar is one such example, and we find another in central Hessia on the main road from Fritzlar towards the north, which runs through Wichdorf. This village, encircled on three sides by forested hills (Fig. 26), is first attested in 949x57 as *Vuihdorpf*,[113] with *wîh* either in its adjectival form meaning 'sacred' or as the substantive 'shrine, sacred place'. The topographical situation of Wichdorf is highly reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon counterpart *weoh* place-names, which, according to Wilson,[114] appear to have referred to roadside shrines rather than to less accessible places of communal gathering. Furthermore, it may be significant that Wichdorf's pre-Reformation church was dedicated to St John the Baptist.[115] This dedication, should it be eighth-century in origin, might indicate that Wichdorf was selected by the missionaries as a suitable place to supplant a pre-existing pagan shrine with an early baptismal church. It may also be the case that *wîh* refers to Christian, not pagan, sacrality, for the adjective does not distinguish between the two; but this, too, could support the theory that Wichdorf was the site of early baptisms.

[113] '[I]n finibus Vuihdorpforum', *UBH*, no. 52, p. 95.

[114] Wilson, 'A Note on *Hearg* and *Weoh*', pp. 181–82; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, pp. 6–10.

[115] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 194.
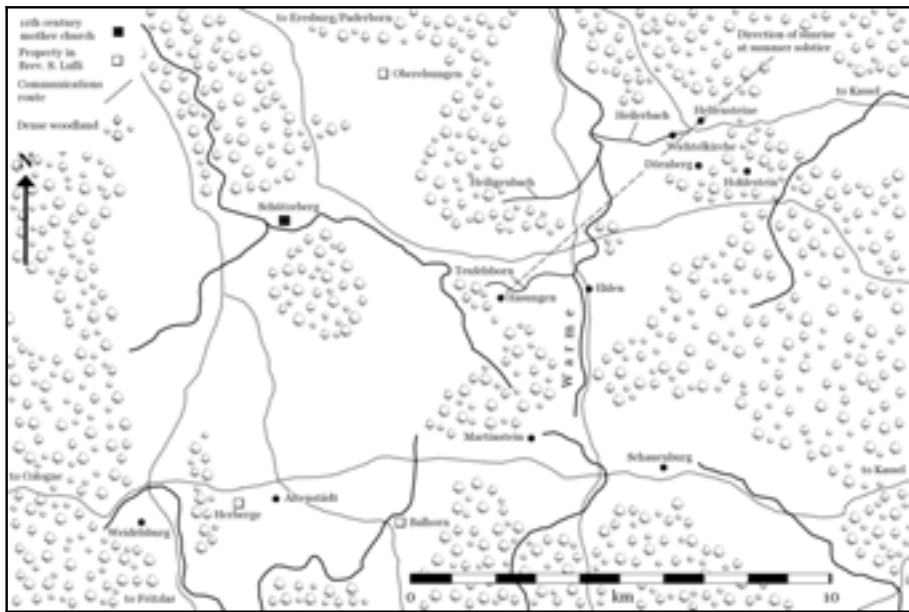
Map 12. Habichtswald. The arrangement of potential
sacred sites along the Warme valley is of particular interest.

## Habichtswald

Habichtswald is a region of high ground on the watersheds of the Eder, Diemel,
and lower Fulda, occupying the north-west corner of Hessia (Map 12). The Saxon
borderlands began at its northern and western extremities, although, as already
discussed, the relative extent of Frankish and Saxon political control in this
area at any one point in time is very difficult to determine. This district was,
like central Hessia, a crossroads. A number of parallel routes ran from Fritzlar
towards the Diemel, while two important east-west routes connected Eresburg
and Cologne respectively with Kassel. The road from Cologne was protected by
the Frankish fortress at Weidelsburg, possibly supplemented by two more at
Schauenburg and Dörnberg.

Approximately 3 kilometres due east of Weidelsburg and 8 kilometres north
of Heiligenberg is the village of Altenstädt, first attested in 831 as *Alahstat*.[116]
The first element of its name is unambiguously derived from OHG *alah*, 'shrine,

---

[116] *CdF*, no. 483, p. 212.

temple',[117] suggesting that Altenstädt, like Wichdorf, was the site of some form of shrine which was easily accessible for the local population as well as for long-distance travellers. Boniface also held an estate just outside Altenstädt at the deserted medieval village of Herberge, attested *c.* 800 as *Harabirge*, 'camp, dwelling place'.[118] Following the road from Altenstädt towards the west brings us to the village of Martinhagen, where the church is positioned on an artificial terrace immediately next to a large basalt column known as the Martinstein (Fig. 27). A series of natural 'steps' leads up the eastern face of the Martinstein to a platform which gives impressive views in all directions. The eye-catching prominence and accessibility of this natural platform, along with the existence of the church immediately next to it (see below, pp. 343–49), suggests that it may have been another focus of pagan religion during the conversion period.

Martinhagen overlooks both the road between Weidelsburg and Kassel and the north-south road from Wichdorf to the Diemel. Taking the latter road north leads us down the Warme valley, which contains one of the most noteworthy configurations of sacred sites in Hessia. On the left we see the plateau-topped hill of Hasungen, straddling the road from Eresburg to Kassel (Fig. 28). It is first mentioned in Ekkebert of Hersfeld's *Vita Haimeradi*, written 1072x90, which recalls how St Heimerad came here in 1017 in order to become a hermit and preacher.[119] Ekkebert recounts that Heimerad, who had already been expelled from a series of churches because of his unusual habits, would sometimes be struck during Mass by a sudden urge to mortify the flesh, and would flee from the surprised faces of his congregation in order to throw himself into a pond or drag himself naked through brambles.[120] The pond, in fact, lay in a natural spring-fed depression in the centre of the plateau and can still be seen. After his death in 1019, Heimerad's grave made Hasungen a popular site of pilgrimage and eventually led to the construction of a monastery in 1074.[121]

[117] Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 150.

[118] *UBH*, no. 38, p. 73.

[119] Ekkebert of Hersfeld, *Vita sancti Haimeradi presbiteri*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Salici: Vitae aevi Carolini et Saxonici*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 10 (1852), pp. 598–607 (p. 602, ll. 34–48).

[120] Ekkebert of Hersfeld, *Vita sancti Haimeradi presbiteri*, p. 602, ll. 49–53.

[121] V. Knöppel, 'Der Hasunger Berg und die Christianisierung des Wolfhager Landes', *Jahrbuch der hessischen kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung*, 52 (2001), 53–65 (pp. 63–64).

Fig. 27. The Martinstein at Martinhagen, showing its proximity to the later medieval church (left). A set of natural 'steps' leads up the outcrop to the platform at the top.



Fig. 28. Hasungen seen from the east. This flat-topped hill may have been the site of a missionary chapel.

Ekkebert adopted a hagiographical commonplace when he portrayed the saint as being led to Hasungen by divine inspiration, but it is probable that Heimerad chose it precisely because it was already the site of a church or chapel known to his parent community at Hersfeld. There was certainly a church in the nearby village of Ehlen, where Heimerad served as priest,[122] but Ekkebert also describes a church on Hasungen itself without stating that Heimerad founded it. The fact that Archbishop Aribo of Mainz built a monastery on Hasungen in 1021 and dedicated its church to St Peter and St Paul along with Heimerad suggests that Peter and Paul were the original patrons.[123] If this supposition is correct, the presence of a church on Hasungen at the beginning of the eleventh century becomes especially interesting in light of local topographical and toponymical evidence: at the foot of Hasungen is a stream called *Teufelsborn*, 'devil's spring', a field with the name *Teufelsland* and a basalt outcrop known as *Heiliger Hain*, 'holy grove', while less than 2 kilometres to the north is another stream called *Heiligenborn*.

Aside from this conspicuous clustering of sacred place-names, the most curious feature of Hasungen is its relationship with the massive outcrop of the Helfensteine on the opposite side of the Warme valley. This outcrop, a cluster of huge basalt extrusions rising some 200 metres above the valley floor, is the most dominant geological feature of the district (Fig. 29). Seen from Hasungen it seems to crown the head of the steep-sided combe known as *Heilerbachtal*, from OHG *heilag*, 'holy, health-giving'; *bacha*, 'stream, beck'; and *tal*, 'valley', named for the stream which flows from the foot of the Helfensteine. Within the combe is another prominent basalt outcrop, a spire-like extrusion known as the *Wichtelkirche*, or 'gnome church'. These natural features — Hasungen, Heilerbachtal, Wichtelkirche, and Helfensteine — form an axis across the Warme valley, and were almost certainly the locations of important pagan activity during the conversion period. The place-name evidence would be sufficient to suggest this, but the topography also allows us to examine the nature of the district more closely.

The high road from the middle Diemel to Kassel swings by the base of the Helfensteine, passing between them and the hill fortress of Dörnberg. Just over 1 kilometre to the south-east is another outcrop called the *Hohlestein*, 'hollow stone', named for the artificial 'basin', 2 metres wide by 1.2 metre deep, which has been cut into its flat top and contains rainwater most of the year.

[122] Ekkebert of Hersfeld, *Vita sancti Haimeradi*, p. 604, l. 45.

[123] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 231.

Fig. 29. The Helfensteine seen from the west. The cattle in
the foreground to the right help give an impression of scale.

The basin was first mentioned in 1697, and although it is impossible to determine its antiquity, some early religious function cannot be ruled out.[124] It is not surprising that the Helfensteine, being a natural focal point of the landscape, apparently attracted ritual activity as early as the Bronze Age, as ceramic evidence from the site testifies; both the inhabitants of Dörnberg and long-distance travellers may have been responsible for this activity.[125]

Not only the location of the Helfensteine in the wider landscape is of interest, but also its structure, for it has a certain symmetry which is most unusual in natural features. The easiest direction of approach is from the north-west, following a steep path which climbs the grassy slope and takes us between the first two outcrops, looming on either side like enormous sentinels (Fig. 30). This leads to a third major outcrop, and finally to the fourth and largest, a building-sized pile of black rock at the highest point of the natural feature (Fig. 31).

---

[124] I. Kappel, 'Der Hohlestein bei Ahnatal-Weimar', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 202–05.

[125] I. Kappel, 'Helfensteine', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 196–99 (p. 196). Haarberg, 'Die mittelalterliche Keramik', p. 5, notes that pottery of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is also known from the Helfensteine, probably relating to a small fortification at the site.

Fig. 30. Helfensteine 'sentinels'.



Fig. 31. Main Helfensteine outcrop. A natural 'staircase'
of basalt winds around the left-hand side to the top.

Fig. 32. Helfensteine 'altar'. The large hill on the left is Dörnberg, a possible Frankish stronghold. The plateau-topped hill of Hasungen is clearly visible in the distance.

This outcrop is encircled by a bank and ditch of uncertain date. A natural 'staircase', formed by columns of rapidly cooled basalt which were thrown up and laid on their side, curves around the side of the rock to the top. The most striking feature of this outcrop, however, is the artificially cut 'altar' on the south-west edge of the flat summit (Fig. 32). It is formed of a 2-metre-wide horizontal slab surrounded on three sides by upwardly sloping slabs. The open side is to the west, looking directly down Heilerbachtal towards Hasungen. The relationship between the Helfensteine and Hasungen is cemented by a curious astronomical phenomenon: every summer solstice, groups of neo-pagans can still be seen gathering on the plateau of Hasungen in order to witness the sun rising precisely between the two largest outcrops of Helfensteine. At the winter solstice the sun rises from a gap between two hills to the south-east of Hasungen.[126]

Between Hasungen and the Helfensteine, as already mentioned, a tall basalt protrusion called the *Wichtelkirche* rises twenty-five vertical metres from the wooded combe of Heilerbachtal (Fig. 33). Close to the top is a large platform, above which a narrow column rises to give the outcrop its church-like appearance.

---

[126] Knöppel, 'Der Hasunger Berg', pp. 57–58.

Fig. 33. The Wichtelkirche seen from the east. An adult figure is barely visible standing on the natural platform, above which rises the 'spire', which gives the outcrop its name.

An old folktale talks of a gnome king (Wichtelkönig) who lived in his underground realm beneath Heilerbachtal. He fell in love with a local maiden and asked for her hand in marriage, but she initially refused him because he was not Christian. He accepted baptism and built a church above ground in order to win her over, but on their wedding day, with all the local people assembled in the church to witness their union, she found herself unable to utter her wedding vows and fled from the altar. There was a great clap of thunder and the church turned to black stone, becoming known as the *Wichtelkirche*.[127]

The attribution of the Wichtelkirche's creation to a non-Christian supernatural figure is interesting, but such a vague association of a natural outcrop with paganism is not unusual in the folk traditions of this region. While the legend itself need not be older than the nineteenth century, the most interesting aspect of it is the name given to the basalt outcrop. *Wichtel* is the diminutive form of modern German *Wicht*, 'gnome, goblin' (OHG *wiht*), but in this case there is also a plausible derivation from OHG *wîh-tal*, 'sacred valley'. There would be no good reason to suggest this were it not for the fact that the combe clearly had some pre-Christian sacred significance. It is possible that the convenient platform of the Wichtelkirche was the focus of certain pagan rituals in the conversion period which gave the names *Wichtal* to the combe and *Heilerbach* to the stream that runs down it. After pagan activity had ceased, the prominence and suggestive form of the outcrop attracted a name such as OHG *Wichtal-kirihha*, 'sacred valley church', and only later did the fortuitous homophony with *Wichtelkirche* lead to the legend of the goblin king who built a church to win a Christian maiden. In other words, the myth may have wrapped itself around an existing place-name rather than vice versa, as myths often do.

The place-name evidence puts beyond reasonable doubt that the middle Warme valley was not only a major focus of pre-Christian sacrality in the prehistoric period, but that pagan religious activity continued in some form up to the mission of Boniface. This may have involved devotional sacrifices at the streams now called *Heilerbach* and *Teufelsborn*, and possibly on the altar-like platforms of the Helfensteine and Wichtelkirche. Every summer solstice, when the dawn sun rose between the crags of the Helfensteine, there may have been communal gatherings at the natural pond on Hasungen; this would certainly help explain the possible existence of a church dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, Boniface's

---

[127] F. Hufschmidt, *Versuch einer Geschichte des oberen Warmetals* (Wolfhagen: Bosser, 1905), pp. 73–75.
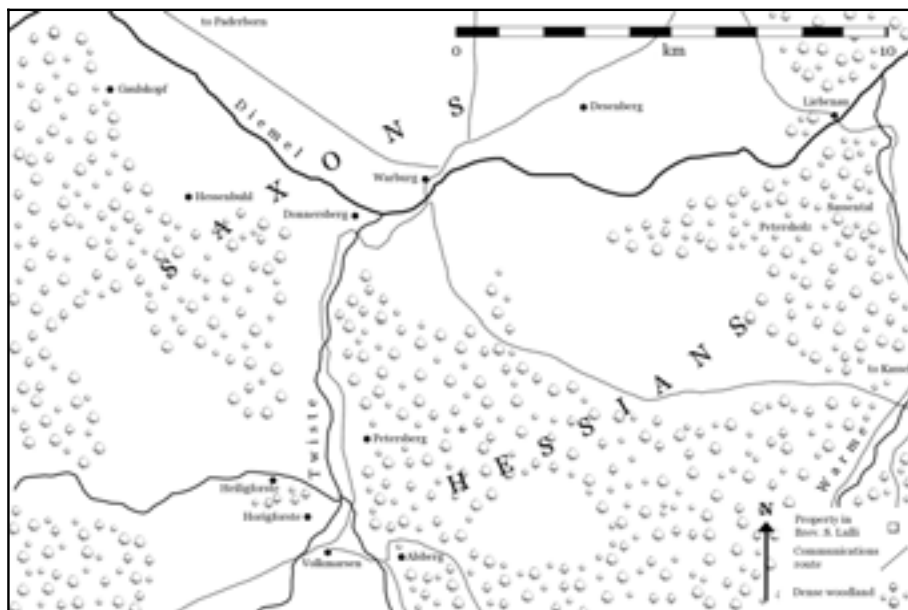
Map 13. The middle Diemel. This area is part of the political, linguistic, and cultural watershed between Hessia and Saxony from the early medieval period to the present day.

two principal patrons,[128] at the beginning of the eleventh century, for such an important site would have been a primary target for the missionaries.

## The Middle Diemel

To the north of Habichtswald is the middle Diemel valley, which was the axis of the Hessian-Saxon borderlands during the eighth century (Map 13). We have already seen that the Saxons had a large fortification at Gaulskopf, and their influence is further indicated by the furnished inhumation cemetery at Liebenau (which included a double horse burial) and the place-name *Sassental*, 'Saxon valley'. The middle Diemel was also the focus of a number of unequivocally sacred pagan sites. We can start with the low rise of Donnersberg, which overlooks the major crossing of the Diemel at modern-day Warburg and is thus at the junction of several long-distance routes, including that from Kassel to Paderborn. It is first recorded as *Thuneresberch* in 1100, at which time it was the site of an

---

[128] See below, pp. 331–41.

important assizes court.[129] The first element of the name is derived from OS *Thunaer*, and it seems very possible that this is an example of a conversion-period pagan gathering place, the location of a shrine of Thunaer similar to that at Geismar, which retained some significance well into the Christian period.

Across the Diemel and 5 kilometres to the north east is Desenberg, a cone-shaped basalt extrusion which towers 150 metres above the surrounding vale (Fig. 34). In 1070 the chronicler Lampert of Hersfeld referred to it as 'Tesenberg'.[130] The first element of this name is derived from the OS *idisi*, those Valkyrie-like figures we have already met in the first Merseburg charm. Simek notes several cases in Norway of place-names containing *dísir*, the ON cognate to *idisi*, including Disen, Dystingbo, Dísaøys, and Disahøyrg, sites associated with *dísir* which were used for regular public assemblies (*þing*) and cult activity. Dystingbo, Simek notes, means 'settlement at the *dísir-þing*', while Disahøyrg is named for a *hörgr*, an open-air sacrificial altar, which was dedicated to the *dísir*.[131] It may be that the *idisi* fulfilled a similar ritual role among the Saxons, and that Desenberg was one such meeting place associated with them. The fact that the *idisi* were invoked in a place which lay at the very heart of such a politically turbulent region indicates both their importance to the eighth-century Saxons and how tightly the pagan religion was tied to resistance against Frankish rule.

A final focal point of pagan significance in the district was at Volkmarsen, a town 7 kilometres south of Donnersberg astride the main route to Fritzlar. Debus notes the presence of the deserted villages of Hörigforste and Heiligforste to the north of the town. Hörigforste is derived from OHG *harug*, 'temple, sacred grove', and *forestis*, 'forest', while Heiligforste bears the meaning 'holy forest'. The appearance of a pair of place-names relating to the same natural feature, one of them containing an obsolete OHG term of sacrality and the other the element *heilag*, is something we have already encountered in Wichberg/Heiligenberg.[132] Schröder discusses a similar example in Tirol, suggesting that it may betray a conscious attempt to replace older 'pagan' place-names with Christian terms for sacrality.[133]

---

[129] H. Jellinghaus, *Die westfälischen Ortsnamen nach ihren Grundwörtern*, 3rd edn (Osnabrück: Schöningh, 1923), p. 11; Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, I, 141.

[130] Lampert of Hersfeld, *Lamperti monarchi Hersfeldensis opera*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS rer. Germ., 38 (1894), p. 115, l. 23.

[131] Simek, *Religion und Mythologie der Germanen*, pp. 126–27.

[132] Debus, 'Ortsnamen des Kreises Wolfhagen', pp. 21–22.

[133] Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, pp. 198–99.

Fig. 34. Desenberg seen from the west. Desenberg is named after the supernatural *idisi*. The twelfth-century fortification may have succeeded an earlier Saxon stronghold.

Fig. 35. Alsberg, near Petersberg and Volkmarsen.

Further evidence abounds in the immediate vicinity: of the fifteen *Teufel*-micronyms recorded within the borders of Hessia by Lyncker in the nineteenth century,[134] three were from Volksmarsen (Teufelsbruch, Teufelshohlsbruch, and Teufelsumkehr), and another two (Teufelswiesen and Teufelstück) were in the district of Breuna, which lies 4 kilometres to the east. Between Breuna and Volksmarsen is the hill of Alsberg, whose name may derive from *alahes-berg*, 'hill of the temple/shrine' (Fig. 35).[135] It may also be significant that there is a natural mineral spring at the foot of Alsberg which still serves as a health spa.

## The Upper Geis

The upper Geis, a river which flows to join the Fulda at Hersfeld, is another district of concentrated place-name evidence (Map 14). A Hersfeld map of *c*. 1650 records an area of woodland with the name *Heiligeholtz*, 'holy wood', and a stream called *Heiligengrab*, 'holy ditch', which flowed from the wood into the Geis at Aua.

---

[134] Lyncker, *Deutsche Sagen*, p. 21.

[135] As so often with topographical features, Alsberg lacks early attestations. Comparable examples of the development from *alah-* to *al-* would be Alstat, 25 km north of Würzburg, which is recorded 750x802 as *Ahalstat* (*UBF*, no. 346, p. 441) and *c*. 800 as *Alahestat* (C. Glöckner, *Codex Laureshamensis*, 3 vols (Darmstadt: Verlag des historischen Vereins für Hessen, 1929–36), II, no. 3660b) and possibly Alsheim, 25 km south of Mainz, recorded in 831 as *Alahesheim* (Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 197). The fact that the first element of Alsberg is in the genitive opens up the possibility that it is derived not from the substantive *alah*, but from a personal name; see Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 213, where Alsfeld is first attested in 1069 as *Adelesfelt*, 'Adal's field'. Andrießen regards Alsheim/*Alahesheim* as more probably derived from the personal name *Alach* due to the appearance of the first element in the genitive (ibid.), and concedes the derivation of Alstat/Ahalstat from *alah* because of the lack of a genitive in the first element (ibid., p. 150). Schröder, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 197, argues that *alah* could appear in place-names in both its genitive and undeclined forms.

Map 14. The upper Geis. This may have been the isolated pocket of Saxon settlement which led Sturm to found a monastery at Fulda instead of nearby Hersfeld.

Another stream named *Heiligenborn*, 'holy spring', also appears on the map flowing from Heiligeholtz in a southerly direction. Both Heiligengrab and Heiligenborn have lost their seventeenth-century names, appearing as Ottersbach and Kisselbach respectively on modern topographical maps, but Karl-Werner Brauer notes that the upper stretch of the neighbouring stream Erzebach, which also originates in Heiligeholtz, is still colloquially known as *Höllkut*, from modern German *Hölle*, 'hell', and *Kaute*, 'hollow'.[136]

These place-names may be related to the hill above Heiligeholtz known today as *Holsteinskopf* and in the seventeenth century as *Hulsteen*. Names such as *Holstein* are often connected in local mythology with Frau Holle (sometimes called *Mother Hulda* in English), a prominent figure in the folk mythology of

---

[136] K.-W. Brauer, 'Ein heiliger Berg im Knüll?', *Mein Heimatland*, 45 (2006), 13–14 (p. 13). Brauer tentatively suggests that the place-name *Distawe* contains an ancient Indo-European element meaning 'god' suffixed by OHG *\*auja*, 'meadow, watering place'. *Dist-* in this case is more likely to derive from OHG *distil*, 'thistle', or perhaps *\*duz*, 'rushing spring'; for the comparable case of Dissen, see Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 228. Brauer's suggestion that Ottersbach derives its name from Odin is also unlikely based on the available evidence.

northern Hesse who was popularized by the Brothers Grimm in their collections of Hessian folktales.[137] Late though the fairy tales concerning Frau Holle may be, and despite their overwhelming concern with pre-industrial domestic morality, her mention in the early eleventh-century *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms and the strength of her association with a number of natural places gives us sufficient reason to suspect that the innocuous Frau Holle has very ancient roots in pre-Christian religion.[138] Buchard of Worms, himself a native of Hessia, wrote concerning her:

> Have you ever believed that there is any woman who can do this thing, namely that some women claim to be deceived by the Devil and that, forced by his command, on particular nights they are compelled to ride upon certain beasts along with a crowd of demons who take on the appearance of women, whom the common people in their foolishness call Holda (or Unholda), and that they are counted among their fellowship?[139]

In the folktales Frau Holle is an elderly woman who lives in another world which can only be reached through the medium of water, typically a well, and the single site most firmly associated with her is indeed the small lake bearing her name in the Meißner hills near Eschwege-Niederhone (Fig. 36). Local cult beliefs surrounding this lake were recorded as early as 1641, when it was said that Frau Holle could on occasion be seen emerging from it; her lake was also regarded as a gateway to the afterlife, and young women would bathe in its water in order to increase their fertility.[140] A spring above the lake has the name *Gottesborn*, 'god's spring', while the narrow valley below it is named *Teufelslöcker*, 'devil's hollow'. A number of other sites associated with her within a 7-kilometre radius include the cave and cliffs of Hohlstein, Hollenbach, Höllental, Höllenruck, and three standing stones at Hollstein.

---

[137] J. Grimm and W. Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 7th edn, 3 vols (Göttingen: Dieteriche, 1857; repr. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980), I, 150–53.

[138] K. Kollman, *Frau Holle und das Meißnerland* (Heiligenstadt: Cordier, 2005), pp. 15–16.

[139] 'Credidisti ut aliqua femina sit, quae hoc facere possit, quod quaedam a diabolo deceptae se affirmant necessario et ex praecepto facere debere, id est cum daemonum turba in similitudinem mulierum transformata, quam vulgaris stultitia Holdam (al. unholdam) vocat, certis noctibus equitare debere super quasdam bestias, et in eorum se consortio annumeratam esse?': Burchard of Worms, *Decretum*, in *Burchardi Vormatiensis episcopi opera omnia*, PL, CXL (1855), cols 537–1058 (IX, col. 962).

[140] Landgraf Hermann zu Hessen-Rotenberg, *Das Werraland in der Beschreibung Niederhessens von Landgraf Hermann zu Hessen-Rotenburg 1641*, ed. by O. Perst, Aus dem Werraland, 7 (Eschwege: Rossbach, 1960), p. 29.

Fig. 36. Modern Frau Holle statue at her lake high in the Meißner hills.
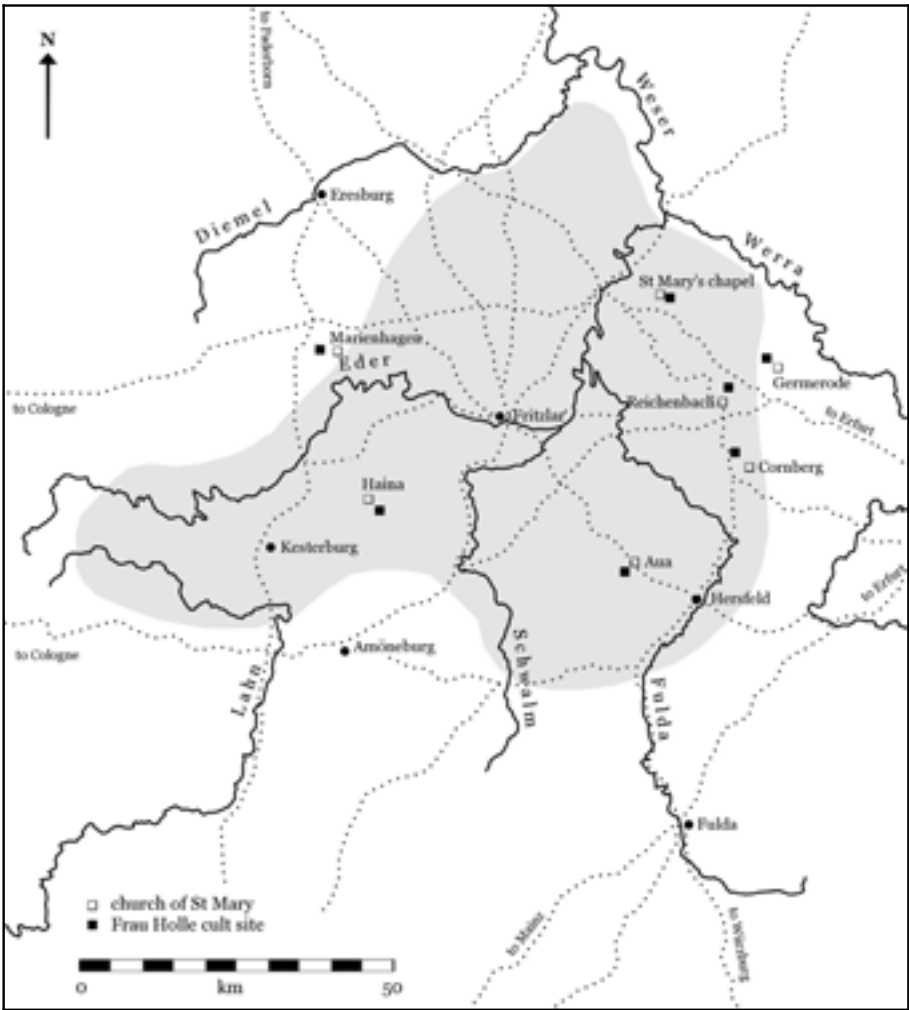
Map 15. Frau Holle cult sites and nunneries of St Mary.

Unfortunately Meißner lies just outside the borders of eighth-century Hessia and a full discussion is thus beyond the scope of this book,[141] but it seems that the cult of Frau Holle was spread widely across Hessia as well as north-west Thuringia (Map 15). Kollmann notes that in three instances a pool or high outcrop apparently associated with Frau Holle also became the location of a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary: one such community was in existence by 1144 at Germerode, 3 kilometres from Frau Holle's lake in the Meißner hills; in the forested hills between Kassel and the Werra there is a chapel of St Mary next to a hill named *Holstein*; and the monastery of St Mary at Haina, founded in 1144, is 3 kilometres from an outcrop called *Hohlstein*, which is said to be haunted by a white-clad woman.[142] To these we might add four more: the chapel of St Mary at Marienhagen, first attested *c.* 1300, is 3 kilometres from a large outcrop known as *Frau Holle Felsen*;[143] the church of St Mary at Reichenbach, originally founded as part of a nunnery but donated to the Teutonic order in 1207, is 2 kilometres from the menhirs at Hollstein village;[144] the Hersfeld nunnery of Kloster Cornberg, founded in 1296, was 4 kilometres from another Hollstein;[145] and a monastery of St Mary and St John at Aua, founded by the Abbot of Hersfeld in 1190, lay just 2 kilometres from Holsteinskopf.[146]

Most of these churches were founded in the twelfth century during the dramatic spread of the Marian cult across Europe,[147] and there is no evidence that any of them was preceded by an earlier church from the conversion period. The appearance of these seven churches and chapels dedicated to St Mary in such close proximity to cult sites of Frau Holle, however, is striking; indeed, they account for every place-name referring to Frau Holle I have so far found in Hessia. They may therefore represent a systematic effort in the region to supplant the popular veneration of a supernatural female deity with the rising cult of her most obvious Christian counterpart. If this was the case, the fact that the cult of Frau Holle was so pervasive at this late date suggests that its roots were ancient and strong.

---

[141] For a discussion of the Meißner folk traditions concerning Frau Holle in the context of the landscape, see Kollmann, 'Sagen als Quellen', pp. 208–10; Kollmann, *Frau Holle und das Meißnerland*; J. Schminke, 'Der Holle-Mythus am Meißner', *ZHG*, 4 (1847), 103–09; *Hessische Sagen*, ed. by U. Diederichs and C. Hinze (Düsseldorf: Diderichs, 1978), pp. 83–98.

[142] Kollmann, 'Sagen als Quellen', p. 209.

[143] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, pp. 320–21.

[144] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 378; Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 205.

[145] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 286.

[146] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 21.

[147] J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, trans. by J. Lloyd (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 76–78.

Fig. 37. Donnerkaute, 'Thunaer's hollow', in the
possible Saxon enclave of the upper Geis valley.

Perhaps she managed to avoid the attention of early missionaries at the expense
of male deities such as Woden and Thunaer, and continued to fulfil the role of
female provider and protector until finally challenged by the Virgin.

Near Salzberg, then, we have a holy wood and two holy streams at the foot of
a hill named for the foremost female deity of pre-Christian Hessia. If we follow
the upstream course of the Geis from Aua as it curves towards the south, we are
led into a short, broad valley. At the far end of the valley is the village of Salzberg,
named for the salt mineral waters of the Geis, and overlooking it is a peak known
as *Teufelskanzel*, 'devil's pulpit'. Jacob Grimm refers to a depression in the side of
the valley immediately south of Salzberg which bore the name *Donnerkaute*,
'Thunaer hollow' (Fig. 37).[148] Finally, on the far side of Teufelskanzel is a stream
with the name *Höhlborn*, 'hell spring'.

The upper Geis valley is a peculiarly self-contained district with regard to both
its physical and toponymic landscape. It forms a discreet pocket of territory on the
road between Fritzlar and Fulda which appears to have been a focus of pagan cult

[148] Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, I, 142.

activity, and this special character may have been related to salt extraction at Salzberg. In this sense it shares more with the Meißner district than the evocation of Frau Holle, for Meißner, too, is a topographically discreet area, a broad valley surrounded by hills, with an important salt spring.[149] Another feature of Meißner, which lay in the north-west corner of Thuringia, was that it fell under the Saxon zone of control in the early eighth century. Although no Saxon-style furnished inhumations have been discovered on the upper Geis, the place-name *Saasen*, first attested in 1100 as *locus Sahson*,[150] recalls their presence at the small but tactically well-situated hill of Neuenstein. Furthermore, the district coincides with a curious void in the distribution of properties donated to Boniface during his lifetime.[151] These distinct characteristics of the upper Geis may be related to the fact that it was also treated as a single territorial block in the medieval ecclesiastical organization of Hessia. The upper reaches of the Geis valley, including Aua, Saasen and Salzberg, were at some point incorporated into the archparish of Mardorf-Berge, whose boundary conspicuously intrudes into the archparish of Ottrau as a consequence. Although this arrangement was in place by the thirteenth century,[152] the date and purpose of its origin are impossible to ascertain. It does emphasize, however, that the upper Geis was deemed worthy of special treatment.

A final matter to consider, given the coincidence of salt extraction, pagan activity, and possible Saxon settlement on the upper Geis, is the episode of the *Vita Sturmi* where Boniface instructed Sturm to seek another site for his hermitage at Hersfeld due to the nearby presence of hostile Saxons:

> You have indeed found a place to live in, but I am afraid to leave you there on account of the savage people who are close by, for, as you are aware, there are Saxons not far from that place and they are a ferocious race. Look for a spot farther away, deeper in the woods, where you can serve God without danger to yourselves.[153]

---

[149] Charlemagne donated saltworks at Bad Sooden to the monastery of Fulda between 768 and 779 (*UBF*, no. 140, pp. 198–99).

[150] *UBH*, no. 119, p. 208, l. 28.

[151] See below, pp. 356–70.

[152] Classen, *Die Kirchliche Organisation*, p. 215.

[153] *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*, trans. by Talbot, p. 183; 'Locum quidem quem repertum habetis, habitare vos propter viciniam barbaricae gentis pertimesco; sunt enim, ut nosti, illic in proximo feroces Saxones. Quapropter vobis remotiorem in inferiorem in solitudine requirite habitationem, quam sine periculo vestri colere queatis': *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 5, p. 367, ll. 30–33.

Map 16. Pagan and Christian place-names in Hessia.
Note the relative density of the sites north of the Eder.

Since the borders of Saxony proper were some 50 kilometres to the north of Hersfeld, the Saxons referred to here were probably a relatively isolated group who had colonized part of the underpopulated forest country between Hessia and Thuringia, and did not react well to the presence of Christian hermits. Eigil does not locate them precisely, but one possibility is that there was an enclave of stubbornly pagan Saxons on the upper Geis who resisted integration into Boniface's minster network, failed to follow the example of their Hessian neighbours by granting him properties, and even threatened the security of the hermitage at Hersfeld.

### Western and Southern Hessia

Hessia to the west and south has revealed less toponymic evidence of potential pagan sites than the north and east (see Map 16). The western edge of Hessia was skirted by the Weinstraße, the main trading and military route between Frankfurt and Mainz and Paderborn. As discussed in Chapter 4,[154] this was a major strategic axis for both Franks and Saxons, who established fortresses at Frankenberg on the Eder and Eresburg on the Diemel respectively. Much of its route actually lay within the territory of the Wedrecii and Nistresi, and whether these groups identified themselves primarily with the Hessians or Saxons — or neither — is unknown.[155] As we shall see below, however, it seems that Boniface never managed to incorporate the Nistresi permanently into his missionary church.

There is slight toponymic evidence of pagan sacrality along the Weinstraße as it enters our district from the south. Field names include a Teufelsgraben and a Teufelskeller near Frankenberg,[156] and a hill named *Teufelshohl* 6 kilometres south-west of Korbach, where the Weinstraße is joined by the road from Cologne. Some 5 kilometres east of Teufelshohl is the large outcrop known as *Frau Holle Felsen*, mentioned above. Figure 38 shows the view of Hessia from the north-west where the road from Eresburg to Fritzlar passes over a low hill called *Auf der Eulenkirche*, which is shown in Figure 39. Knappe suspects that this hill was the site of an early church that replaced a pagan shrine,[157] and the same road passes by a Teufelskopf when it climbs onto the ridge of the Langerwald.

---

[154] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 157–68.

[155] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 197–200.

[156] Lyncker, *Deutsche Sagen*, p. 21.

[157] Knappe, *Mittelalterliche Burgen*, p. 119.

Fig. 38. View of Hessia from the north-west.



Fig. 39. Petersberg (left arrow) and Auf der Eulenkirche (right arrow). Auf der Eulenkirche was the site of a chapel in the twelfth century, which has now disappeared.

Southern Hessia, from the Eder as far south as Amöneburg, is also largely devoid of toponymic evidence. We have already mentioned the Hohlstein close to the twelfth-century monastery of St Mary at Haina, whose rocky summit is reputedly haunted by Frau Holle, and between Amöneburg and Fritzlar there is a hill with the name *Teufelsberg*. One possible site of conversion period pagan activity is Langenstein, on the main route from Amöneburg to central Hessia, where the large prehistoric quartz menhir from which the village derives its name has been incorporated into the circular enclosure wall of the church. The association of church and menhir here is reminiscent of Martinhagen, where the church was built on a terrace immediately next to a natural outcrop.

Two further sites associated with paganism are found immediately adjacent to Hessia's southernmost medieval mother churches. The first is the Teufelsberg, which rises on the north bank of the Fulda, directly across the river from the mother church of Braach. The second is on the very southern border of Hessia, 2.5 kilometres from the mother church of Ottrau: the basalt mass of Bechtelsberg, also known as *Bechelsberg*, whose name may come from OHG *behhari*, 'beaker, bowl', a reference to the 200-metre-wide crater-shaped depression at its summit. This depression has the name *Hexenkaute*, 'witches hollow', and according to Heßler was the site of the law court of Ottrau,[158] first mentioned in the fourteenth century.[159] According to a tradition still followed in the nineteenth century, at midnight on *Walpurgisnacht* (Mayday) locals processed from the surrounding area to the Hexenkaute, where they danced and played music and games, and collected herbs from the slopes of the hill.[160] Finally, it should be mentioned that Grimm refers to a second hill named *Gudensberg*, 'Woden's hill', in the vicinity of Erkshausen, a village 6 kilometres north-east of Braach, although I have been unable to locate it.[161]

## The Early Christian Landscape of Hessia

### Boniface's Hessian Minster Network

The evidence for sites of pagan activity — roadside shrines, votive spots at springs or natural rock formations, seasonal politico-religious gathering places — is

---

[158] C. Heßler, *Hessischer Sagenkranz: Sagen aus Kurhessen*, 4th edn (Kassel: Vietor, 1928), pp. 97–98.

[159] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 365.

[160] Heßler, *Hessischer Sagenkranz*, pp. 97–98.

[161] Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, I, 126.

scattered widely across Hessia, with a notable concentration north of the Eder. It was not enough for Boniface merely to confront such sites in dramatic setpieces which proved the superiority of Christ, however. Once the dust of the initial conversion phase had settled, the long, frustrating process of Christianization began, and this required the establishment of a stable and comprehensive system of pastoral care. The Rome-oriented episcopal minster system of Wessex discussed in Chapter 3 provided Boniface with his primary model, and it is still possible to reconstruct the basic skeleton of what one might call Boniface's minster network within Hessia.

The church of St Brigid at Büraburg and probably the church of St Martin at Bergheim were founded before Boniface's arrival, but apart from the monastery at Fritzlar, founded in the early 720s, and the oratory that replaced Jupiter's Oak at Geismar in 723 there are no contemporary textual references to Bonifatian foundations in Hessia. We must therefore turn to the charter evidence and to later patterns of ecclesiastical organization in the region, the latter of which has been comprehensively surveyed by Classen, Demandt, and Metz.[162]

The only early medieval record of a donation to Fritzlar is a charter of Charlemagne from 782, which survives in a mid-twelfth-century Hersfeld cartulary. In this charter Charlemagne granted to Fritzlar, which he appears to have taken under royal patronage in 775 along with Hersfeld,[163] an unstated number of unnamed churches which he had formerly been granted by Lul, along with 'their ornaments of gold, silver, and other material, books' and other appurtenances.[164] One named property formerly held by Lul, the church at Mardorf-Berge, was to return directly to Lul's possession; the fact that the charter was preserved in a Hersfeld cartulary under the title *de Martdorf* implies that Lul then transferred the church to Hersfeld.[165] The only clue in the charter as to the precise location

---

[162] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*; Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit'; W. Metz, 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', *HJL*, 5 (1955), 24–56.

[163] Schwind, 'Fritzlar zur Zeit des Bonifatius', pp. 84–85; Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar*, p. 117.

[164] '[P]raefatas res ad ecclesiam, quam ipse archiepiscopus nobis condonavit cuius vocabulum est Frideslar […] tradimus perpetualiter ad possidendum cum terris ecclesiis, cum eorum ornamentis auro scilicet et argento vel aliis speciebus codicibus, domibus aedificiis mancipiis accolis vineis silvis campis pratis, aquis aquarumve decursibus et incursibus mobilibus et immobilibus, gregibus cum pastoribus': *Die Urkunden*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 142, p. 193, l. 37, to p. 194, l. 8.

[165] '[T]radimus atque in omnibus indultum esse volumus excepta ecclesia una in villa quae vocatur Martdorf, quam antea habuit, nobis condonavit': *Die Urkunden*, ed. by Mühlbacher, p. 194, ll. 10–12. See J. Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*: Gestalt und Inhalt', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 12 (1960), 18–52 (p. 38).

of the 'certain properties within the kingdom of the Austrasians […] in the administrative district of Raban, Swigar and Agilgaud',[166] is given by this mention of Mardorf-Berge, which lies 10 kilometres south-east of Fritzlar. The original charter by which Lul had first granted the properties to Charlemagne has not survived.

Both Classen and Michael Gockel have proposed that the 'certain properties' of the 782 grant comprised a group of churches which later came to head archparishes within the archdiaconate of Fritzlar.[167] In 1085 the Archdeacon of Fritzlar held jurisdiction over five churches bearing baptismal rights in their archparishes: Bergheim, Gensungen, Urff, Schützeberg, and Fritzlar itself (see Map 17). Conspicuous by its absence is the baptismal church of Mardorf-Berge, the church exempted by Charlemagne, which was still independent of Fritzlar in the eleventh century. The 'certain properties' referred to in the 782 donation included churches of considerable wealth, furnished with gold, silver, various books, and additional property, while the mention of Mardorf-Berge, which would later become a baptismal church and the centre of an archparish, gives some idea of the administrative status involved.[168]

Thus in 782 the only piece of the puzzle we have is Mardorf-Berge, with a vague idea of the overall picture, while in 1085 we see another similar-looking puzzle with a Mardorf-Berge-shaped hole. It is very plausible that the two puzzles are essentially the same, separated by three hundred and three years. The churches which the charter states Lul had granted to Charlemagne before 782 (perhaps at the same time as Fritzlar and Hersfeld were taken under royal protection in 775) must have been in his private possession, and, since he joined the mission at a relatively late date (738), it is likely that he had inherited them directly from Boniface, just as he inherited Mainz, Hersfeld, Ohrdruf, and Sülzenbrücken.[169]

---

[166] '[R]es aliquas infra regnum Austrasiorum […] in ministerio Rabano et Swigario vel Agilgaudo': *Die Urkunden*, ed. by Mühlbacher, p. 193, ll. 34–35. Compare the apparent use of *Austria* to refer to the area of the former bishopric of Büraburg in Hersfeld's 775 charter of royal protection. *UBH*, nos 5–6, p. 12, l. 15. On these three otherwise unknown royal officials, see H. K. Schulze, *Die Grafschaftsverfassung der Karolingerzeit in den Gebieten östlich des Rheins*, Schriften zur Verfassungsgeschichte, 19 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973), pp. 210–11; Hörle proposed that their administrative districts coincided with the archparishes of Mardorf-Berge, Bergheim, and Gensungen ('*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 37).

[167] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*; Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 37; Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', pp. 96–102.

[168] Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', p. 99.

[169] Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', pp. 100–01.

Map 17. The pre-Reformation ecclesiastical landscape. The shaded area represents the eighth- and ninth-century *pagus Hessorum*.

If we can equate Mardorf-Berge and the mother churches of Fritzlar's eleventh-century archparishes with the churches held by Lul, we therefore have a network of original Bonifatian foundations.

The nature of this network of early minsters becomes clearer if we view it in its topographical context. As is clear in Map 17, each church lies on an important communications route leading through central Hessia. Mardorf-Berge, Urff, Bergheim, and Gensungen are evenly positioned 10–15 kilometres from Fritzlar, encircling the densely settled district around the crook of the Eder so that no village or farmstead would ever be more than a morning's walk from a church. From a geographical perspective, the northern gap in this ring of churches is filled by Kirchberg; the earliest reference to a chapel (*kapella*) here is in the late eleventh-century *Vita sancti Haimeradi*, but its name and location suggest that it was a foundation of early date and significance.[170] The existence of a late seventh and early eighth-century *Reihengräber* cemetery directly beneath the foundations of the earliest church building also places the origins of that church in the eighth century, very likely during Boniface's mission, while the conspicuous wealth of the graves would indicate that Kirchberg was home to some very influential families.[171]

If we travel north from Kirchberg on the medieval route towards Donnersberg and the middle Diemel, just over halfway we pass by the hillock of Schützeberg, where a mother church dedicated to St Peter is first mentioned in a document of 1074, by which time it had acquired twelve daughter parishes.[172] Schützeberg was the major settlement of the district prior to the foundation of the nearby town of Wolfhagen in the thirteenth century, after which point it gradually diminished in economic, political, and finally religious importance. The settlement is long deserted and nothing of the church now remains on the hill except grass-covered foundations and a graveyard (Fig. 40). Its name is first attested in 1081 as *Scuzzeberg*, with the first element possibly related to OHG *scuzzan*, 'to attack, advance forward', an appropriate name for a hill which lies between the Frankish fortress of Weidelsburg and the Saxon frontier.[173] The location provides an easily defendable borderland observation point which would have been of great value to embattled missionaries based a full day's journey from Fritzlar. Its subordinate status to Fritzlar in the eleventh century implies that it was the northernmost of Boniface's minsters to survive.

---

[170] Ekkebert, *Vita Haimeradi*, chap. 8, p. 601, ll. 14–18.

[171] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 143–56.

[172] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 228.

[173] Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 202.

Fig. 40. Schützeberg seen from the north-west. This is a probable site of a Bonifatian frontier minster. A church and village existed here until the end of the sixteenth century.

Outside this inner circle of mother churches are the archparishes of Kirch-ditmold to the north-east and Braach and Ottrau to the south, all of which lay within the archdiaconate of Fritzlar in the twelfth century. The fact that they were not subordinate to Fritzlar in 1085, however, suggests that they were only incorporated into the archdiaconate in the twelfth century. The church of St Martin at Kirchditmold was, in the opinion of Metz, most likely a post-Bonifatian royal foundation. The Carolingian kings since Charlemagne had reserved the wide stretch of forested land between Kassel and the Werra for themselves,[174] and it is significant that this area had already been settled by Saxons when they did so;[175] these Saxons may have been vassals of Charlemagne in the 770s, but their forebears may not have been so easily coerced by Frankish power, and this could explain why there is no evidence for Bonifatian foundations in the Kassel district. Metz also regards the archparishes of Braach and Ottrau as creations of Lul, who subordinated them to his new monastery at Hersfeld

---

[174] Metz, 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', pp. 45–46.

[175] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 217–25.

perhaps at the same time as he permanently alienated Mardorf-Berge from Fritzlar in 782.[176]

It therefore seems that the central Hessian churches in Map 17 — Fritzlar, Bergheim, Gesungen, Mardorf-Berge, Urff, and Schützeberg — represent the remnants of Boniface's network of central missionary foundations. The overall coherence of the scheme, a web covering the Hessian heartlands with its focus at Büraburg/Fritzlar, appears to betray a single organising hand dating from some time before Lul's *c.* 775 grant of Mardorf-Berge and the 'certain properties' to Charlemagne. The network of churches, indeed, is reminiscent of the minster system that Boniface had known on the Solent (see Map 3, p. 94). Although the pattern in central Hessia, having been established according to a single design, is far more regular than on the Solent, the spacing of mother churches is similar in each case: the average distance between the minsters of Romsey, Eling, Hamwic, Bishops Waltham, Titchfield, and Portchester is just over 16 kilometres; between the minsters of Fritzlar, Bergheim, Kirchberg, Gensungen, Mardorf-Berge, and Urff just under 14 kilometres. This suggests that the early minsters of the Solent and of central Hessia administered similarly sized districts. Furthermore, the position of the short-lived bishopric at Büraburg was also an integral part of the scheme, for it occupied the very heart of the network and hence recalls the close association of the bishopric of Winchester with the minsters of its diocese.[177]

Finally, the common dedications of Fritzlar, Gensungen, Mardorf-Berge, and Schützeberg to St Peter, along with the fact that these churches were privately held by Lul until 775, strongly suggests that he had inherited them from Boniface. Demandt thinks it probable that the mother churches of Urff and Mardorf-Berge also bore medieval dedications to St Peter.[178] The authority of Rome, for Boniface, was embodied in the person of St Peter, on whose tomb he had taken his episcopal vows, and whom he valued as his patron and protector above all other saints.[179]

---

[176] Metz, 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', pp. 27–32.

[177] See Chapter 3, above, pp. 108–13.

[178] Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 130.

[179] See Gregory II's original mandate for Boniface's mission ('per inconcussam auctoritatem beati Petri apostolorum principis'; Tangl, ep. 12, p. 17, ll. 24–25; Boniface's episcopal oath ('Promitto ego Bonifatius gratia Dei episcopus vobis, beato Petro apostolorum principi vicarioque tuo beato papae Gregorio successoribus'; Tangl, ep. 16, p. 28, ll. 16–18); and his request of Eadburg that she sent him copies of the epistles of his 'master' St Peter written in gold ('Sic et adhuc deprecor, ut augeas quod cepisti, id est, ut mihi cum auro conscribas epistolas domini mei sancti Petri apostoli [...] quia dicta eius, qui me in hoc iter direxit, maxime semper in presentia cupiam habere'; Tangl, ep. 35, p. 60, ll. 14–16).

We can also see the antiquity and importance of this pattern in the secular land-scape: not only did the eleventh-century boundaries of the Hessian *Grafschaft* (an administrative unit roughly equivalent to the English county) broadly coincide with the borders of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar, but its four major legal courts were based at Maden, Gensungen, Schützeberg, and Kirchditmold.[180] The first three of these had early minsters dedicated to St Peter. Maden, as we have seen, was a major Hessian place of assembly in the pre-Christian period. Kirchditmold, whose church probably dates from Charlemagne's reign, had a similar ancient status, as suggested by its name, first recorded in 1081 as *Thiedmali*, from OHG *diot*, 'people', and *mahal*, 'legal court, place of assembly'.[181]

Aside from the daughter parish churches of St Peter at Metze and Utters-hausen in central Hessia, four more dedications to St Peter exist along the course of the Eder (see Map 17), and the physical relationship of this latter group to local dedications to St Martin is interesting. Whereas the churches of St Martin are all found in settlements on the higher ground overlooking the middle Eder valley, three of the four churches of St Peter lie along the river itself. As stated in Chapter 4, the dedications to St Martin in this district appear to represent the limit of Frankish expansion by the time of Boniface's arrival in 721.[182] In contrast to the similar dedications of the upper Lahn, they seem to be restricted to areas of secondary settlement, whereas the churches of St Peter occupy the primary settlement area of the lower ground. Since the distribution of central Hessian dedications to St Peter coincides precisely with Boniface's early missionary activity in that largely pagan district,[183] the relationship between dedications to St Peter and St Martin along the middle Eder also suggests that Boniface was the first to found churches among the indigenous population (the Wedrecii and Nistresi on Map 10), either before or after the Franks founded churches on the higher ground. This is particular true of the fourth church of St Peter, which is found not along the Eder itself but at Nieder-Ense 6 kilometres to the north, in the heart of Nistresi territory.

It is apparent from Map 17 that the pre-Reformation ecclesiastical organiza-tion of the upper Eder and Amöneburg district lacked the coherence of the

---

[180] Demandt, *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, p. 168.

[181] Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 228.

[182] Chapter 4, above, pp. 177–84.

[183] There was a cult of St Peter in the Frankish territories prior to Boniface's mission, but it expanded greatly through his influence. See E. Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*: *Gesämmelte Schriften (1952–1973)* (Munich: Artemis, 1979), pp. 318–54.

Fritzlar archdiaconate. This could have been due to both later medieval re-organizations and the influence of the archbishopric of Trier in the district before and during Boniface's mission.[184] The ecclesiastical arrangements north of Fritzlar's medieval archdiaconate date from the foundation of the bishopric of Paderborn at the earliest (799), and, as argued in Chapter 5, whatever missionary stations Boniface founded north of the Diemel probably did not last long beyond his death.[185] The permanent extent of his mission probably never even reached the lower Diemel, for the archdiaconate of Hofgeismar was founded only in the eleventh or twelfth century and was never part of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar.[186]

We can now observe on Map 18 how closely the borders of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar, church dedications to St Peter, the limit of the *pago Hessorum*, and the evidence for eighth-century Saxon settlement coincide. The line thus formed, running north-east from the middle Eder to the lower Diemel, is striking. We know from the reference to the Nistresi and Bructeri in the letter of Gregory III discussed in Chapter 5[187] that Boniface had evangelized beyond this line by 738 at the latest, and had even ventured beyond the Diemel. By 741 he felt ready to establish a stable episcopal system in Germania, which included the bishopric of Büraburg, whose boundaries were approximately preserved in the pre-Reformation archdiaconates of Fritzlar and Amöneburg.[188] The system of mother churches in central Hessia was therefore probably in place by this date, and Boniface may have begun drawing up plans for its eventual expansion into the north.

There is a trace of the first (and only) stage in this expansion. As can be seen in Map 17, the position of Schützeberg relative to its fellow minsters and the apparent northern extension of Fritzlar's archparish suggest an attempt by Boniface to push missionary territory from central Hessia towards the Diemel.

---

[184] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, pp. 10–14, 60–154, and Demandt, 'Hessische Frühzeit', pp. 54–56, regard the contrast as arising principally from the influence of Trier; Metz, 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', pp. 54–55, argues that the ecclesiastical landscape of Amöneburg and the upper Lahn may have been largely restructured in the eleventh century.

[185] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 211–16 and pp. 229–34.

[186] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 245.

[187] Tangl, ep. 43, p. 68, l. 12.

[188] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 9.
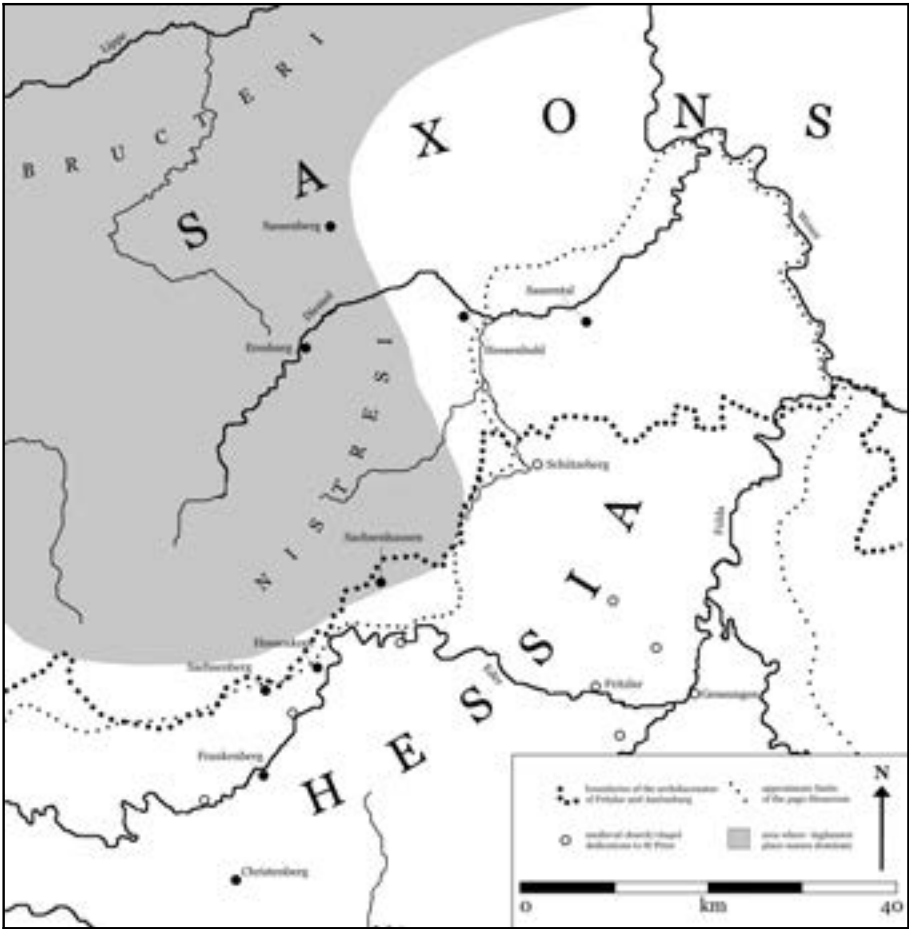
Map 18. The Hessian-Saxon borderlands, showing the coincident boundaries of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar, the *pagus Hessorum*, and the extent of Saxon settlement as suggested by place-names.

The new minster of Schützeberg may have superceded an earlier church at Kirchberg, which was consequently absorbed into Fritzlar's archparish and never became a mother church itself. Braach and Ottrau may have been extensions of this minster network towards the south, while the church at Kirchditmold, as suggested by its dedication to St Martin, was most likely founded in the context of Charlemagne's conversion of Saxony.

## Evidence for Other Early Churches and Chapels

Evidence for Bonifatian-period church foundations in Hessia is not restricted to the later mother churches. Willibald's account of the destruction of the shrine at Geismar demonstrates that Boniface, at least in this one case, deliberately replaced a site of pagan worship with a Christian oratory.[189] This may have been a general policy that he employed at other shrines, and there is some toponymic evidence to support this. On Map 16, alongside place-names indicating pagan cult activity, I have noted place-names which imply the presence of a former Christian church or chapel. There is, of course, a greater degree of uncertainty in identifying early Christian sites in this way, since chapels were continually established throughout the medieval period and may have influenced the toponymic landscape.

Three features of sites named for vanished churches and chapels can indicate their relative antiquity. First, early churches in Hessia tended to be founded in prominent positions, often on hills or rises overlooking settled districts. Of the purported Hessian minsters, those at Bergheim, Kirchberg, Mardorf-Berge, Urff, Kirchditmold, Schützeberg, and Fritzlar occupy visually dominant sites. Second, the two historically attested Bonifatian foundations in Hessia, at Geismar and Fritzlar, were dedicated to St Peter, and, as we have just seen, a number of early Hessian churches appear to have been similarly dedicated. An elevated site dedicated to St Peter will thus fit the pattern of known and likely Bonifatian foundations. Third, sites which have a clear topographical relationship to a site of probable pagan activity may well be contemporary with that activity, hence datable to the earliest phase of Christianization in Hessia.

Names of hills comprising a particular saint or Christian term suffixed by *-berg* or *-kopf* are widespread in Germany; Bach knew of more than thirty examples of Petersberg alone.[190] There is a Simonskopf directly facing a Teufelskopf

---

[189] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, l. 26, to p. 32, l. 2.

[190] Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 368.

Fig. 41. Priesterberg (left arrow) and Eresburg (right arrow) seen from the east, showing the steep valley of the upper Diemel immediately behind them.

at the north end of the Langerwald, the old elevated route between Fritzlar and Eresburg. Simon the Zealot, along with Judas Thaddeus, was patron of Lul's monastic foundation at Hersfeld and possibly of Sturm's chapel which preceded it. A conversion-period chapel dedicated to Simon in northern Hessia is therefore quite conceivable. Probstberg lies adjacent to the Weinstraße at Goddelsheim, as does Priesterberg near Eresburg (Fig. 41). A hill named *Kreuzberg* faces the Teufelsberg between Amöneburg and Fritzlar. There is also a Michelskopf overlooking the Eder 4 kilometres west of Bergheim. Interestingly, the village at the foot of this hill is Affoldern, where the Amöneburg nobles Argoz and Lipgart donated land to Fulda between 750 and 779.[191] The double connection of Michelskopf/Affoldern to Amöneburg — that is, the ownership of land there by mid-eighth-century Amöneburg nobles and the fact that Boniface's minster at Amöneburg was dedicated to the archangel Michael — suggests that Michelskopf is so named because it was granted to the minster community at Amöneburg at some point in the eighth century, possibly for the construction of a chapel.

St Peter's name is attached to four topographical features in Hessia: Petersberg, on the road between Fritzlar and Eresburg, next to the hill called *Auf der Eulenkirche*; a second Petersberg astride the road from Fritzlar to the middle Diemel; a Petersholz, 'Peter's wood', near the Diemel at Sassental; and Petershöhe, 'Peter's height', on the road from Fritzlar to Erfurt. None of these sites is associated with a surviving or recorded church foundation, but their names are suggestive of former ecclesiastical ownership. Each hill is between 36 and 41 kilometres from Fritzlar, lying on a communications route as it reaches the approximate limit of eighth- and ninth-century Hessia. The church of St Peter

---

[191] *UBF*, no. 116, p. 183; see below, pp. 356–70.

at Nieder-Ense, although it does not occupy an elevated position, also fits this pattern. Were these St Peter toponyms the result of piecemeal church land ownership from later periods, the regularity of their distribution would be difficult to explain; as it happens, they account for five of the six major entry points into northern Hessia. The absence of a St Peter toponym at the sixth entry point, where the road crosses the river Fulda north-east of Kassel, may be explained by the fact that this district appears to have been ceded to the Saxons by the 770s at the latest.[192]

## Confrontation and Supplantation

Having reviewed the evidence for pagan and early Christian sacrality in the Hessian landscape, let us now consider the nature of their relationship. Toponymic evidence lacks temporal depth, making it difficult to draw conclusions as to when and why a certain place received its name. We can be fairly confident that place-names which refer explicitly to pagan gods or spirits would not have been coined after the conversion period, and explicitly Christian place-names, as well as *Teufels-* place-names, cannot date from before it. However, there is the possibility that Christian place-names originate from considerably later than the eighth century, and often there is no evidence by which we might determine their antiquity. In order to minimize misinterpretation, it is vital not to look at place-names in isolation, but to view them within the wider historical and topographical context, and to detect meaningful patterns in the whole.

The most telling feature of the evidence, to begin with, is its apparent concentration in Hessia north of the Eder. There may be good reasons for this relating to the political context of the eighth century. As we have seen, the Archbishop of Trier already had interests in the upper Lahn valley, perhaps including the Amöneburg district, when Boniface first arrived, and southern Hessia is therefore more likely to have experienced early exposure to Frankish Christianity. The country north of the Eder, meanwhile, was a heavily militarized region bordering the Saxons, for whom independence from Frankish religious and political domination were inseparable. Northern Hessians undoubtedly had much closer social and cultural ties to Saxony than their southern counterparts; Metz has observed a distinction between the names of ninth-century donors to Fulda and Corvey south of the Eder, where donors typically had Frankish names, and

---

[192] See Chapter 5, below, pp. 200–03.

north of the Eder, where their names were typically of a Saxon form.[193] The land between the Eder and Diemel was, in the eighth century as it is today, a linguistic and cultural watershed, and we should not be surprised if Boniface found paganism to be more entrenched the closer he came to the Saxon borders.

Bearing this in mind, how direct were Boniface's attempts to supplant pre-existing pagan sites in Hessia? The Geismar episode, of course, shows that a direct confrontation happened at least once, but was this an isolated incident or part of general policy? Several of Hessia's eleventh-century mother churches, which I follow Classen and Gockel in regarding as Boniface's original minster foundations,[194] are associated with ancient gathering places and pre-Christian ritual sites. The minster of Gensungen was at the foot of Heiligenberg, and in the sixteenth century (and presumably much earlier) was the site of a local court subordinate to Maden.[195] The minster of Urff was founded 1 kilometre from a natural mineral spring at Zwesten, whose name, according to Guth, probably means 'the washing place' and may refer to a pre-Christian sacred stream similar to that at Geismar.[196] The minster at Braach, as we have seen, was founded immediately across the river from a hill now known as *Teufelsberg*, while Ottrau minster was next to the crater-topped hill of Bechelsberg, still the site of traditional Mayday celebrations. The remaining minsters of Bergheim, Mardorf-Berge, and Schützeberg have no apparent association with places of pre-Christian political or religious significance. It is worth noting that the post-Bonifatian church of St Martin at Kirchditmold was located 1.5 kilometres from a field which bore the name *altes Gericht*, 'the old court'; while the first reference to the court is from the early fourteenth century,[197] the meaning of the name *Ditmold*, 'the people's place of assembly', suggests that its roots lay in the pre-Christian period.

Aside from those minsters which formed the skeleton of Boniface's pastoral system and later became mother churches, a number of other early churches, both surviving and now vanished, were positioned close to pagan sites. Most significantly, Boniface may have used land he was granted at Maden to found a church of St Peter at the political and religious heart of Hessia, the focus of a long-standing cult of Woden which remained the highest Hessian court for centuries

---

[193] Metz, 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', p. 31.

[194] Classen; '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 37; Gockel, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', pp. 96–102.

[195] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 163.

[196] Guth, 'Ortswüstungen', pp. 68–70.

[197] Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 92.

to come. Willibald did not record Boniface's destruction of a shrine of Woden at Maden, but this is not to say that it did not happen; Willibald may simply have regarded the felling of the Oak of Jupiter at Geismar as the first and most dramatic of Boniface's interventions, and treated it as symbolic of the conversion of Hessia as a whole. Not far from Maden was the pagan roadside shrine at Wichdorf, which was at some point replaced by a church of St John the Baptist.

Following the road from Wichdorf farther north takes us down the Warme valley, passing by the church of Martinhagen and its adjacent basalt platform. The village was founded and donated to the nearby monastery of Hasungen (to be discussed shortly) in 1082, and a priest is first recorded at its church of St Nicholas in the fourteenth century.[198] Although dedications to St Nicholas are rare in Germany before the twelfth century,[199] we should not rule out the possibility that a church or chapel existed at Martinhagen under a different patron before this date, and was rededicated upon the foundation of the village.

North of Martinhagen is the hill of Hasungen. We discussed above the important toponymic evidence of this district as well as the astronomical relationship of Hasungen to the valley of Heilerbachtal and the Helfensteine outcrop at its head, and concluded that this was one likely focus of those nature-focused religious customs condemned by Boniface at the Frankish church councils of the 740s. If we accept this, then the existence of a church of St Peter and St Paul on the otherwise deserted summit of Hasungen at the start of the eleventh century is highly suggestive. It may have been founded during the conversion period in order to supplant one of the foremost and most ancient pagan cult centres of northern Hessia in much the same way as Boniface founded a chapel to St Peter at Geismar.

As already mentioned, the name of St Peter also reappears at five of the six main entry points into northern Hessia. The church of St Peter at Nieder-Ense is 1 kilometre from the cliffs of Frau Holle Felsen and 4 kilometres from Teufelshohl. The Petersberg between Fritzlar and Eresburg is immediately adjacent to the hill Auf der Eulenkirche, first attested in the twelfth century as *munitio dulenkerken*.[200] *Munitio* simply means 'fortification', and the first element of *dulenkerken* is therefore probably derived from OHG *tuola*, 'ditch', referring to a defended enclosure whose precise location has since been lost. Knapp suggests

---

[198] Martinhagen is first attested as *Meribodonhago* in a charter of 1082. Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 231; Reimer, *Historisches Ortslexikon*, p. 321.

[199] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, p. 43.

[200] Knappe, *Burgen in Hessen*, p. 119.

that an early church at Auf der Eulenkirche replaced a pagan roadsign shrine, and he may be right; it may also be that a chapel to St Peter was founded on Petersberg and was later moved to the more defendable neighbouring hill during a period of turbulence in the borderlands. The second Petersberg, on the road from Fritzlar to Donnersberg, is on the opposite bank of the Twiste from the purported forest shrine of Hörigforste and 2 kilometres from Alsberg. The wooded rise named *Petersholz* looks down into the combe of Sassental, 'Saxon valley', and is 3 kilometres from the Saxon pagan burial ground at Liebenau. Finally, Petershöhe, although it is not near any known pagan cult site, is at an important crossroads of long-distance routes on the Hessian-Thuringian border.

The first question to ask is whether the name of St Peter was evoked primarily as an acknowledgement of church ownership or in reference to churches or chapels dedicated to the saint which have now vanished. The former explanation seems the least likely. Neither of the two ecclesiastical institutions which might have owned Hessian property on this scale in the medieval period, the monasteries of Fulda and Hersfeld, had a dedication to St Peter. The third most important institution, Fritzlar, of course did, but it was already eclipsed as a potential landowner by the late eighth century, when Lul donated the properties in northern Hessia he had inherited from Boniface directly to his own foundation of Hersfeld.[201] Nonetheless, the distribution of the St Peter toponyms demonstrates a clear relationship between central Hessia and Saxon-occupied territory.

Could it be that these represent a series of conversion-period chapels founded systematically at each entry point from the north into Hessia? It is evident that an isolated, fortified church survived until the twelfth century at Auf der Eulenkirche, but was later abandoned; other hilltop chapels, their relevance diminishing as the centuries wore on, may have met a similar fate. The one exception is the church of St Peter at Nieder-Ense, which, being in the centre of the populated landscape rather than on a hill, was more suitable as a base for pastoral care. The systematic nature of such a scheme would be just the sort to come from the mind of Boniface, a man 'gripped by passionate loyalty to principles of order'.[202] It also reflects the missionary strategy evident in Fritzlar's minster network: comprehensive in its conception, grammatically precise in its execution. Such chapels would have ensured that the majority of travellers entering Hessia from Saxony or Saxon-controlled Thuringia could not doubt that this landscape now belonged to Christ.

---

[201] See below, pp. 356–70.

[202] Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 418.

The evidence of church foundations, topography and toponymics thus exemplifies the two-stage nature of the mission. The initial conversion stage involved confronting and supplanting pagan sacrality within the landscape on its own terms. Geismar is our only historically recorded example, but there were doubtless other cases where local shrines were deliberately violated and replaced by Boniface and his missionaries. Clare Stancliffe has shown that Martin of Tours embarked on just such a campaign of destruction of pagan shrines and temples across fourth-century Gaul,[203] and Boniface may have had this example in mind when he felled the Oak of Jupiter. Maden is one likely example of a supplanted pagan shrine, Hasungen another; we might also consider such pagan/Christian place-name pairings as Teufelskopf/Simonskopf, Teufelsberg/Kreuzberg, and Teufelshohl/Probstberg as examples where a pagan sacred site was confronted by a Christian shrine in the vicinity. The suggested system of chapels to St Peter at the entry points to northern Hessia would also have belonged to this initial conversion stage.

The second stage of the mission was Christianization, and this depended on the long-term arrangement of pastoral care. Isolated hilltop chapels, even when directly on a communication route, were of little use in this process. Thus Boniface founded his network of minsters centred on his primary foundation at Fritzlar. In some cases, as at Gensungen, Braach, Ottrau, and possibly Urff, these churches were also well situated to replace a pagan cult site. In the case of Bergheim, Boniface may have taken over a pre-existing Frankish church. Schützeberg, meanwhile, was a militarily secure location close to the pagan frontier. Boniface thus adapted his approach to suit local circumstances, while maintaining a striking regularity and hierarchical coherence within the network as a whole. These minsters gave his missionaries a secure foundation upon which to construct an enduring parochial system.

It also seems, however, that Boniface had very little success in confronting paganism beyond northern Hessia, which came to form the limit of his jurisdiction as the bishop of Mainz. We must not assume that Hessian and Saxon paganism were passive systems of beliefs and customs that failed to respond or adapt to the advance of Christianity. Indeed, the turbulent final years of Boniface's mission, in which his most vulnerable churches became the targets of catastrophic attacks, suggest that the pagan Saxons reacted in an extremely vibrant and hostile fashion to their attempted evangelization and subjugation to Frankish

[203] C. Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 328–40.

rule. The long-term stalling of Boniface's mission at the Saxon borderlands created a Christian/pagan frontier between the upper Eder and lower Diemel. Some borderland pagan sites, for example Donnersberg on the Diemel, may even have been established as a consequence of Boniface's success in central Hessia, when those Hessians who resented the advance of Christianity under Frankish protection retreated northwards and drew a new line of defence with their Saxon neighbours, reaffirming and redefining their own 'pagan' identity in the process.[204]

Boniface's mission field was embattled during the last years of his life, and since Eresburg had become a Saxon stronghold by 772,[205] any missionary territory north of the Diemel must have been abandoned by that date. In 745, only four years after the foundation of the bishopric of Büraburg, we have the first reference to a serious pagan incursion into Boniface's territory.[206] Very soon thereafter, *c.* 746, he seems to have incorporated the bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt into his own see of Mainz, refocusing his personal attention on the mission in the Saxon borderlands. In 751, apparently fearing an imminent pagan attack, he asked Pope Zacharias whether it would be permissible in such an event for missionaries to flee from their churches.[207] His fears were realized the following year, when, as he reported to the newly installed Pope Stephen II, more than thirty of his churches in the Hessian-Saxon borderlands — possibly including the burned church at Gaulskopf — were destroyed.[208]

Perhaps Boniface's missionary priests had followed Zacharias's 'healthy advice' and escaped before their churches were burned;[209] in any case, Boniface immediately set to work directing the repairs, for which reason he was late in greeting Stephen as the new pope in 752.[210] His roughly contemporary letter to Fulrad of St Denis presents a picture of isolated, vulnerable priests dwelling in remote

---

[204] See Carver, 'Why That?'

[205] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 211–16.

[206] Tangl, ep. 60, p. 121, ll. 4–8.

[207] For Zacharias's reply, see Tangl, ep. 87, p. 200, ll. 3–8.

[208] Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 15–21. Since Pippin's retaliatory campaign of 753 was restricted to the north of Hessia, this was most likely the source of the Saxon attack in 752. *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 182, ll. 19–27; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 10–11.

[209] 'Et pro hoc, frater, salutare consilium damus. Si fieri potest et locum inveneris, insta ad predicandum illis; si autem supportare non valueris eorum persecutionem, habes preceptum dominicum, ut in aliam ingrediaris civitatem': Tangl, ep. 87, p. 200, ll. 4–8.

[210] 'Et haec fuit occasio tarditatis litterarum et appellationis paternitatis vestrae, et non aliqua neglegentiae incuria': Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 20–21.

districts under imminent threat of pagan annexation, who relied on Boniface's personal support to obtain anything more than the basic necessities of life.[211] If we are to localize these priests anywhere, we should place them on the very fringe of Boniface's stable mission territory, in a sweep of land between the upper Eder and lower Diemel. This was the district described by the missionary priest Wiehtberht, in his 732x54 report to the monks of Glastonbury, as 'the common border of the pagan Hessians and Saxons',[212] where he claimed to have suffered hunger, thirst, cold and pagan attacks.[213]

## Supporting the Mission

### Dealings with the Frankish Clerical and Lay Elites

Through the close examination of toponymics, topography, and some charter evidence, we have obtained a more nuanced impression of Boniface's mission in Hessia than has been achieved in scholarship to date. Yet our view so far has been distant, of results and long-term processes, not of the constant negotiations and anxieties that must have occupied a great deal of Boniface's time. The point need not be laboured that the missionaries could not have achieved as much as they did in Hessia without considerable political and material support. Many objects, as has long been recognized, were requested and received by Boniface from his Anglo-Saxon contacts, most particularly books,[214] but also items of clothing and on at least one occasion cash.[215]

---

[211] Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, l. 11, to p. 214, l. 2.

[212] '[I]n confinia paganorum Haesonum et Saxonum': Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 12–13.

[213] '[L]icet valde sit periculosum ac laboriosum pene in omne re, in fame et siti, in algore et incursione paganorum': Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 24–26.

[214] H. Schüling, 'Die Handbibliothek des Bonifatius: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 4 (1963), 286–347 (pp. 294–327); Greenaway, 'Saint Boniface as a Man of Letters', especially pp. 40–45; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 207–08; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 89; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 139–45; J. W. Clay, 'Gift-Giving and Books in the Letters of St Boniface and Lul', *Journal of Medieval History*, 35 (2009), 313–25.

[215] Items of clothing were most often sent as gifts between individuals. Boniface thanked Bugga for sending him *vestimenta* (Tangl, ep. 27, p. 48, l. 32); he also thanked Eadburg for the same (Tangl, ep. 35, p. 60, l. 13); he requested a cloak of Abbot Hwætberht of Wearmouth-Jarrow in return for his gift of a goat-hair coverlet (Tangl, ep. 76, p. 159, ll. 15–18); and he received two

Such far-flung friends, however, could be of little help in the day-to-day support of missionary parishes, cells, and the gradually increasing monastic communities of oblates and scribes. For this, Boniface needed either to establish a system of church estates, or to take over existing estates through attaining control of the Frankish-founded churches which held them. As early as 722 Gregory II wrote to Boniface instructing him on the distribution of church income (*reditus ecclesiae*) in four equal parts: one part Boniface was to keep for himself, another part for the clergy, another for almsgiving, and the fourth for the maintenance and adornment of church buildings,[216] although this does not help us determine the source or extent of Boniface's economic support at this point.[217] By the 740s, however, the securing of church property and income from interested laymen had become a major concern of Boniface, and this concern centred on church estates that were held *in precarium*.

The *precarium* was a form of legal agreement by means of which the Frankish church leased out much of its land to secular tenants from the sixth century onwards, and the decrees of the Frankish synod of 742 provide the first evidence we have that Boniface was attempting to reform this state of affairs by having some of the precarial lands returned to the church and by clarifying the legal status of the remainder through a system of uniform rent (*cursus*).[218] We do not know

---

woollen cloaks from King Æthelbert of Kent (Tangl, ep. 105, p. 230, l. 27). During his second sojourn in Frisia in 719–21, Bugga sent Boniface the considerable sum of fifty solidi (Tangl, ep. 15, p. 28, l. 2).

[216] Tangl, ep. 18, p. 32, ll. 11–16.

[217] On church tithes, see G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes from their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); J. Semmler, 'Mission und Pfarrorganisation in den rheinischen, mosel- und maasländischen Bistümern (5.–10. Jahrhundert)', in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto Medioevo: Espansione e resistenze*, SSCI, 28 (1982), pp. 813–88.

[218] The nature and forms of *precaria* have been subjected to a great deal of debate among historians. Grants of land were often made to churches *in precarium*, meaning that the grantor retained usufruct of the property until death, after which time it would come fully into the possession of the church. The church could then grant the land as a *precarium* to a particular party, often the heir of the deceased grantor; as a means of maintaining the cohesion of hereditary property the *precarium* could potentially fulfil an important social and economic need, and was also a useful way for a church to obtain regular income from lands it could not afford to maintain itself. See Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 137–45; I. Wood, 'Teutsind, Witlaic and the History of Merovingian *Precaria*', in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 31–52; I. Wood, 'Land Tenure and Military Obligations in the Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian Kingdoms: The Evidence of Bede and Boniface in Context', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 9/10

how long Boniface had been trying to re-establish church control over these semi-alienated estates, but the rapid expansion of his mission beyond the Diemel in 738/39 probably made it a much more urgent matter, particularly since the disruption of the wars had also prevented many of the Frankish elite from making their customary pious donations to the church.[219] A related problem was that some former priests whom Boniface had stripped of their office and cast out of the church had been using their influence at court to obtain *precaria* and establish themselves as secular landholders. The idea of such men supporting themselves on church property was deeply offensive to Boniface.[220]

Boniface's attempts at reforming the *precaria* met the resistance of Carloman's circle, ostensibly because the Franks required the income from their precarial estates, many of which may have been held in their families for generations, to continue the border wars against the Saxons, Frisians, and Moors.[221] The synod of 742 decreed that those lands which could not be returned directly to the church should be held subject to an annual rent of one solidus per peasant household (*casata servorum*); if the holder of the *precarium* should die, that land would revert to the church, but could be granted *in precarium* anew at the whim of the Frankish ruler; if a church was suffering dire poverty due to *precaria*, it would have its lands returned.[222] Paul Fouracre has argued that the stated annual rent of one solidus per household, a considerable amount, may have been meant

---

(2005), 3–22 (pp. 13–21); H. J. Hummer, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 78–104. Among historians, more attention has traditionally been paid to the *precaria verbo regis*, church lands leased out as 'benefices' by the Frankish ruler to his followers, especially concerning this custom's supposed role in the origins of feudalism. See H. Brunner, 'Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehnwesens', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanische Abteilung*, 8 (1887), 1–38; F.–L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. by P. Grierson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 3–19; Bloch, *Feudal Society*, pp. 164–65; G. Constable, '*Nona et decima*: An Aspect of Carolingian Economy', *Speculum*, 35 (1960), 224–50; Constable, *Monastic Tithes*.

[219] See Zacharias's comments in Tangl, ep. 60, p. 123, ll. 8–10: 'et dum Dominus donauerit quietem, augentur et luminaria sanctorum pro eo, quod nunc tribulatio accidit Saracinorum, Saxonum uel Fresonum, sicut te ipse nobis innotuisti' (and when the Lord grants us peace, offerings for the saints will increase in place of those which, as you inform us, the attacks of the Saracens, Saxons and Frisians have reduced).

[220] Tangl, ep. 60, p. 123, ll. 11–19.

[221] Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 218.

[222] For this decree of the synod of 743 see Tangl, ep. 56, p. 102, ll. 3–16; alternatively, *Concilia aevi Karolini I*, ed. by A. Werminghoff, MGH, Concilia, 2. 1 (1902), pp. 6–7 (p. 7, chap. 2, ll. 10–19).

primarily as a symbolic sum, with the actual rent negotiated in kind on a case-by-case basis.[223]

Boniface viewed the rent of one solidus as unsatisfactory,[224] but was barely able to scratch the surface of the problem; in 751 he was still trying to have the *census* increased from the level defined in 742, and had apparently given up trying to have the precarial lands returned outright.[225] Furthermore, some of those laymen who did provide Boniface's churches with tithes (*decimae*) were attempting to dictate how they should be distributed, to which Zacharias responded by reiterating that the distribution of income must be divided by the bishop between support for the clergy, almsgiving, and church maintenance.[226] By 751 another potential source of income had appeared in the form of Slavs settled on Christian land in Thuringia, and the Pope urged Boniface to extract rent from them as well as from their Christian neighbours, although how easily this could be accomplished is quite another matter.[227]

By the final years of his life, Boniface was making great efforts to ensure that at least his own foundations did not fall into alien hands. This included not only laymen in general, but also any churchmen not intimately connected to his mission. His request in 742 that he be permitted to appoint an heir and successor (*heres et successor*) to his bishopric was granted by Pope Zacharias only with extreme reluctance.[228] After Boniface's death, Lul did retain private control of Mainz, Fritzlar, and the Hessian mother churches discussed above, while the squabble between Lul and Sturm over the control of both Fulda and the relics of their master resembles nothing so much as two estranged brothers fighting over a disputed inheritance.[229]

---

[223] Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, p. 140.

[224] Tangl, ep. 60, p. 123, ll. 4–10.

[225] Tangl, ep. 87, p. 199, ll. 20–23.

[226] Tangl, ep. 83, p. 187, ll. 9–20.

[227] Tangl, ep. 87, p. 200, ll. 16–21.

[228] For Boniface's request, which he claimed had been instigated by Gregory III, see Tangl, ep. 50, p. 83, ll. 12–17. For Zacharias's response, Tangl, ep. 51, p. 89, ll. 6–29. Boniface also asked Pippin to recognize Lul as his successor: Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, ll. 20–25.

[229] H. Nottarp, 'Sachkomplex und Geist des kirchlichen Rechtsdenkens bei Bonifatius', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 173–96 (p. 193), sees Boniface's desire to appoint an heir and successor as a evidence for his 'Germanic' attitude towards the legal arrangement of inheritance. It may be the case that Boniface regarded Lul in much the same way as a secular Anglo-Saxon lord might regard an adopted heir, one who was not his son but was related by blood.

Boniface's frequent interaction with the Frankish elites, both clerical and lay, was one necessary aspect of the mission which he resented, as he often expressed in his letters to his Anglo-Saxon brethren back home.[230] In the ninth century Charles Martel had a reputation in certain ecclesiastical circles as a great despoiler of the church, but despite his opportunistic deposition of several Frankish bishops west of the Rhine in favour of his own followers he was an early supporter of Boniface's mission in Hessia.[231] This may be partly explained by the fact that neither the Frankish church nor the leading Frankish families had yet established deep roots in that region,[232] and it was not until the 740s, when Boniface began pushing for general church reform and personal control of the bishoprics of the lower Rhine, that he started treading on influential toes. Perhaps the greatest single disappointment he suffered in this respect was his failure to secure the

---

[230] For discussions of Boniface's often troubled relationships with the Frankish clerical and lay elites, see in particular Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, pp. 199–252; E. Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi similes', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 412–40; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 124–26; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 71–85.

[231] Charles Martel's later reputation was primarily due to Hincmar, bishop of Reims between 845 and 882, who was attempting to regain church lands that had fallen into secular hands. In his appeals to Louis the German and Charles the Bald in 858 he blamed Charles Martel for establishing the custom of *precaria verbo regis*, for which he supposedly received eternal damnation. See Hincmar of Reims, *Epistola Synodali Carisiacensis ad Hludowicem regem Germaniae Directa*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum II*, ed. by A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH Capit., 2 (1890), pp. 427–41 (p. 432, ll. 31–34). Timothy Reuter has argued that a sentence from Boniface's letter of admonition to Æthelbald of Mercia which makes a similar statement concerning Charles Martel reflects the degree of antagonism between Boniface and the Frankish ruler: T. Reuter, '"Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik" im Zeitalter Karl Martels: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by J. Jarnut, U. Nonn, and M. Richter (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001), pp. 35–59. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 134–36, has stated *contra* Reuter that the sentence in question, which appears only in a summarized form of the letter by William of Malmesbury and not in its earliest version, should be considered a much later interpolation. See also Wood, 'Land Tenure', p. 21. For the version of the letter from the Mainz tradition, see Tangl, ep. 73, pp. 146–55; for the later summary, William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by R. Mynors, R. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–99), I, 115–19, chaps 80–81.

[232] The early dispute between Boniface and Milo of Trier over the control of missionary territory in Hessia, especially since Boniface emerged victorious, suggests that Milo's authority over the area was more rhetorical than actual. By the late eighth century, the charters of Fulda demonstrate that the concerns of the leading Frankish families were overwhelmingly concentrated in the Rhine-Main region, the Lahn valley, the Wetterau, and the Grabfeld, while very few donated holdings in Hessia. See below, pp. 356–70.

bishopric of Cologne, which, according to Boniface, Carloman had promised him at the Frankish council of 744.[233]

Although Boniface's hopeless struggles against the entrenched interests of the Franks in the matter of the *precaria* may have earned him many lay opponents, his conflicts with certain powerful clerical families were no less serious. The two best known examples are the episcopal dynasties of Milo of Trier and Reims and Gewilib of Mainz, both of whom had inherited their bishoprics from their fathers and were extremely powerful figures in Frankish Rhineland politics.[234] At the roots of their conflict with Boniface were two irreconcilable conceptualizations of the episcopal office: the monastic-centred ideal of Boniface, where bishops wielded limited power and fulfilled a moral function in the secular world while maintaining strict boundaries against worldliness, and the long-established Frankish model where bishoprics could be granted, inherited or appropriated like any other piece on the political chess board, and where bishops, being quite prepared to swap mitre and stole for sword and shield as well as to marry, were scarcely distinguishable from any other Frankish warrior noble.[235]

Boniface was unable to make a dent, even a symbolic one, in the accepted Frankish model until the Frankish synod of 747, when he obtained a decree that no cleric should partake of hunting or 'wear pompous or martial clothing, or bear arms'.[236] Yet Hildegar of Cologne was clearly able to disregard this ruling with royal approval when he joined (and fell during) Pippin's Saxon campaign in 753,

---

[233] In 751 Boniface was still petitioning for the see of Cologne, and accused the Franks of postponing any clear decision (Tangl, ep. 60, p. 124, ll. 23–27; ep. 80, p. 179, ll. 27–29; ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 14–20; ep. 87, p. 195, l. 26, to p. 196, l. 2). See Chapter 5, above, pp. 229–34.

[234] The essential study on Milo and Gewilib is Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi similes'. See also Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*, pp. 120–22; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 71–74; H. H. Anton, 'Liutwin: Bischof von Trier und Gründer von Mettlach; Zugleich ein Beitrag zu dem historischen Wandlungsprozeß im ausgehenden siebenten und im frühen achten Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Saargegend*, 38/39 (1990/91), 21–51.

[235] Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 71–72; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, p. 127; Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi similes', p. 418. The obvious Anglo-Saxon exception to the Boniface's ideal is Bishop Wilfrid, whose concept of episcopal authority was significantly closer to that of his Frankish counterparts. See D. Pelteret, 'Saint Wilfrid: Tribal Bishop, Civic Bishop or Germanic Lord?', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint*, ed. by Hill and Swan, pp. 159–80. Even Wilfrid, however, did not commit the principal acts by which, in Boniface's view, some Frankish bishops violated the sanctity of their office, namely sexual relations and the bearing of arms.

[236] Tangl, ep. 78, p. 163, ll. 23–28, and p. 164, ll. 3–4; see also *Concilia*, ed. by Werminghoff, p. 47, ll. 19–20, 26–27.

and Milo of Trier was killed while hunting wild boar.[237] During Boniface's lifetime his only real success against the ingrained custom of warrior bishops was the expulsion of Gewilib from the see of Mainz in 745, and even this victory may have been due as much to Gewilib making powerful enemies at Carloman's court as to Boniface's moral condemnation of his behaviour.[238] Little wonder that in a 747 letter to Cuthbert of Canterbury Boniface likened himself to a pitiful guard dog, snapping and snarling but helpless against the thieves who were plundering his master's house,[239] and complained that the Frankish clerics had no sympathy at all for his attempts to spread the Gospel among the pagans.[240]

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill once warned against the assumption, too easily made from the rhetoric of Boniface's letters alone, that the saint's attempts at reform were beset on all sides by the hostile and rapacious Frankish clergy, Milo *et eiusmodi similes*.[241] Milo, with some justification, may have viewed Boniface as an

---

[237] Anon., *Ex miraculis S. Liutwini auct. monacho Mediolacensi*, ed. by H. V. Sauerland, in MGH SS, 15. 2 (1888), pp. 1261–68 (p. 1262, ll. 7–9).

[238] Boniface's assertion in his letter to Zacharias that Gewilib, having been condemned at the Frankish synod, was heading to Rome 'without the sanction of any one of us' (sine cuiuscumque consultu apud nos) suggests that the ex-bishop had lost whatever supporters he had had among the highest Frankish elite (Tangl, ep. 60, p. 124, ll. 5–8). That other political factors were at play here besides Boniface's complaints is evident from the general Frankish failure to discipline or expel warrior bishops comparable to Gewilib, while his expulsion may have been otherwise useful for the Frankish ruler in that it allowed Boniface to be offered the bishopric of Mainz as compensation for being denied Cologne. According to an eleventh-century Mainz tradition, Gewilib's condemnation and expulsion came about after he joined a campaign of Carloman to Saxony in order to avenge the death of his father. He sought out the Saxon who had killed his father, requested parley with him in a boat on the Weser, and slew him in cold blood; upon his return to Mainz he voluntarily surrendered his bishopric at Boniface's request (Anon., *Vita quarta Bonifatii auctore Moguntino*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii*, ed. by Levison, pp. 90–106 (pp. 91–93)). Ewig remarks that Gewilib's voluntary surrender of Mainz, which clashes with directly contemporary sources, is an obvious fiction, probably invented by the anonymous eleventh-century hagiographer in order to preserve the reputation of the ancient Mainz bishops ('Milo et eiusmodi similes': p. 422 n. 50). We cannot be certain of the reliability or otherwise of the rest of the tradition, but Gewilib's pursuit of a blood feud under arms would be quite consistent with the martial habits of contemporary bishops such as Milo and Hildegar, and the Weser would indeed have been a suitable place for a Saxon and Frank to meet in truce in the mid-740s. See F. Staab, 'Rudi populo rudis adhuc presul: Zu den wehrhaften Bischöfen der Zeit Karl Martells', in *Karl Martell*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 249–75.

[239] Tangl, ep. 78, p. 165, ll. 18–22.

[240] Tangl, ep. 63, p. 130, ll. 2–4.

[241] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 160.

interloper in the upper Lahn and Amöneburg district, which lay on the fringe of the archdiocese of Trier. In the eleventh century a monk of Mettlach wrote a defence of Milo based on the favourable and pious reputation he had left behind in his native diocese, which may serve to remind us of how few alternative voices remain that can challenge Boniface's and Hincmar's conquests of posterity.[242] There were also many influential Frankish churchmen, such as Abbot Fulrad of St Denis and Chrodegang of Metz, former referendary to Charles Martel, who also saw the necessity of reform and were moving in the same direction as Boniface, if not on precisely the same path,[243] while Fouracre has suggested that Boniface's loud complaints derived principally from his own problems in the Mainz region, and should not be taken as evidence for the overall condition of the Frankish church.[244]

## Dealings with Local Elites

Although the conflicts between Boniface and the highest echelons of the Frankish elite are relatively well documented, his negotiations with the principal figures of other social ranks are not. In order to reconstruct patterns of support at the local level we must turn to the charter evidence of the monasteries of Fulda and Hersfeld, but first I shall make some general observations. First, Frankish social and political relationships at all levels were maintained through the continual re-affirmation and negotiation of complex social networks.[245] Support and loyalty had to be publicly proclaimed, and in the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of duties, alliances and personal honour a supporter could easily slip away without being noticed until it was too late. We see direct evidence for this at the highest social level: Boniface won the protection of Charles Martel,[246] and upon the latter's

[242] 'Milonis autem [...] finis et actus est memoria dignus, quamvis Hincmarus Remorum episcopus perversorem eum episcopatus sui describit' (The end and deeds of Milo, however, are worthy of remembrance, even though Bishop Hincmar of Reims portrayed him as a perverse bishop): Anon., *Ex miraculis S. Liutwini*, p. 1262, ll. 4–5.

[243] R. McKitterick, 'The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 9 (1989), 291–329 (pp. 317–19) (repr. in R. McKitterick, *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6th–9th Centuries* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), chap. 4).

[244] Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 133–34.

[245] M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 93.

[246] Tangl, ep. 22, pp. 36–38.

death wasted no time in seeking the support of Carloman, Pippin, and the ill-fated Grifo.[247] During his first visit to Amöneburg, Boniface was probably operating under the protection of Charles Martel when he cast down the idols of Dettic and Deorulf, and he was certainly under it — and in the helpful shadow of a looming Frankish hillfort — when he destroyed the sacred pagan shrine at Geismar.[248]

Letters of protection, however, would have been useful only as far as the sponsor was feared and his authority felt. The local leaders in northern Hessia must have been in a difficult position until the Saxon rebels were finally pushed beyond the Weser in the 780s, for they were based in territory disputed between Franks and Saxons. At the local level Boniface had to deal with an entirely different world of small-scale rivalries and politics, where a leader's decision to promote Christianity would have serious consequences for his community. This would especially have been the case among Saxons, whose religion appears to have been thoroughly entwined into networks of kinship and authority, without the mediation of a priestly caste who could be marginalized, supplanted or won over.[249] The harbouring of a preacher or — even worse — the building of a church could make the village a potential target in the event of pagan attack. Boniface's missionaries had probably escaped before pagans burned more than thirty of their churches on the Hessian-Saxon borderlands in 752,[250] but one wonders how the invaders treated the ordinary Christians who were left behind.

The lesser elite of the eighth century, whether Frankish, Hessian, Thuringian, or Saxon, were no doubt just as capable as their social and political superiors of devising ways in which they might benefit from either helping or hindering Boniface and his agents. For instance, we know from a letter of 726 that Boniface was accepting child oblates by that date, and it seems that some parents were donating their children on the condition that they be allowed to leave the cloisters

---

[247] Boniface wrote letters to the three brothers appealing for support, although only the letter to Grifo survives: Tangl, ep. 48, pp. 76–78; also n. 1 on p. 76. Later letters between Zacharias and Boniface demonstrate his attempts to secure the support of Carloman and Pippin. Tangl, ep. 50, p. 82, ll. 1–4; ep. 51, p. 91, ll. 20–22; ep. 57, p. 103, ll. 17–22.

[248] Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas*, p. 208; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 40–41. The only surviving letter of support of Charles Martel most likely dates from the time of Boniface's second visit to Rome, made after his arrival at Amöneburg but before the destruction of the Geismar shrine (Tangl, ep. 22, pp. 36–38). It is however difficult to imagine Boniface having any influence over Dettic and Deorulf unless he had already been sanctioned by Charles Martel.

[249] I. Wood, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions', pp. 259–63.

[250] Tangl, ep. 108, p. 234, ll. 15–21. See Chapter 5, pp. 211–16.

when they reached marriageable age.[251] These parents were evidently eager to use Boniface's new monastic foundations to their own benefit, hoping to leave their children in the care of the church until they reached a socially useful age. This could obviously work against Boniface's long-term interests by draining one of his most precious resources, and Gregory II instructed him that oblates were on no account to leave the cloisters in order to marry.[252]

Although hagiography and the surviving letters of Boniface and Lul allow us precious little insight into the intricacies of local politics, an examination of later charters may help throw some faint light on the structure of Boniface's local support networks. We have already encountered the single surviving charter which records a donation to Fritzlar in the early medieval period.[253] If we look at the wider cartulary traditions of Hessia and its surrounding regions, we can make some further useful observations. The charters in question are those of Fulda, founded by Boniface in 744, and Hersfeld, founded by Lul between 769 and 775.

By the end of the eighth century the monastery of Fulda possessed widespread properties in Hessia, Thuringia, Saxony, along the Lahn, in the Wetterau, the Grabfeld, around Mainz, and along the Main.[254] During the 830s and 40s Abbot Hrabanus Maurus of Fulda gathered all of the monastery's charters into a single collection. He arranged the almost two thousand charters geographically according to fifteen tribal districts, then each district chronologically according to abbot, and assembled them or had them copied into eight volumes.[255] About a third of Hrabanus's collection survives in later copies, but the fourth volume, which contained the charters of Hessia and Lahngau, is attested only in the *Codex Eberhardi*, a stringently summarized copy of Hrabanus's entire collection which dates from the twelfth century.[256]

---

[251] Boniface was accepting infants ('in infantiae annis', i.e., children up to seven years old): Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 12–17.

[252] Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 12–17.

[253] *Die Urkunden Pippins*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 142, pp. 193–94. See above, pp. 331–41.

[254] The primary editions and analyses of the eighth-century charters of Fulda are *UBF*; *Traditiones et antiquitates Fuldenses*, ed. by J. Dronke (Kassel: Fischer, 1844; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1966); *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis*, ed. by Dronke; T. Werner-Hasselbach, *Die älteren Güterverzeichnisse der Reichsabtei Fulda* (Marburg: Elwert, 1942); B. Bischoff, *Die Abtei Lorsch im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften*, 2nd edn (Lorsch: Laurissa, 1989). Matthew Innes's study of Frankish social relations in the middle Rhine was based heavily on the charters of Fulda and Lorsch (*State and Society*, especially pp. 13–43).

[255] *UBF*, pp. xviii–xix.

[256] *UBF*, pp. xxviii–xxix. The *Codex Eberhardi*, which Stengel incorporated into his chronological edition of the Fulda charters, has also been edited and published separately: *Der*

The monastery at Hersfeld also received numerous donations in Hessia, Thuringia, and Saxony during the last quarter of the eighth century, though not on the scale of Fulda.[257] The survival of charters at Hersfeld is far more haphazard than at Fulda, with almost all charters of private donations having been lost. Royal charters from the late eighth century onwards have for the most part survived as originals or later copies, while the earliest donations to Hersfeld, both royal and private, are recorded in the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*. This document, preserved in a twelfth-century Hersfeld cartulary,[258] is a summary, originally compiled shortly after the death of Charlemagne in 814, of the monastery's holdings.[259]

The *Breviarium sancti Lulli* in its surviving form has a three-part structure, and its complex textual history has been analysed by Hörle.[260] The first section lists properties donated to Hersfeld by Charlemagne before he took it under royal protection in 775,[261] the second properties acquired by Lul before 775,[262] and the third properties donated by private individuals (*liberi homines*) after this date.[263] Style and form indicate that the three parts were not contemporary, but were edited and rearranged at least twice before they reached their present form *c.* 815. Hörle deduced that section 2 was the oldest, followed by section 3 and finally

*Codex Eberhardi des Klosters Fulda*, ed. by H. Meyer zu Ermgassen, 3 vols (Marburg: Elwert, 1996–2007).

[257] The charters of Hersfeld have received far less attention than those of Fulda. The standard critical edition is *UBH*. For a map showing the distribution of properties of Fulda, Hersfeld, and Lorsch, see Backhaus, 'Karte 9: Besitzkarte frühkarolingische Klöster'.

[258] Staatsarchiv Marburg, MS Bestand K 244, fols 33ᵛ–34ʳ.

[259] The *Breviarium sancti Lulli* is published in the first volume of Weirich's critial edition of the charters of Hersfeld: *UBH*, no. 38, pp. 68–74. A facsimile also exists: *Breviarium sancti Lulli: Ein Hersfelder Güterverzeichnis aus dem 9. Jahrhundert. Faksimileausgabe*, ed. by T. Franke (Bad Hersfeld: Selbstverlag Landkreis Hersfeld-Rothenburg, 1986). On the dating and structure of the text, see Weirich's commentary, ibid., pp. 68–70; also Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', in which he refutes Weirich's belief that the *Breviarium* was added to between its creation *c.* 815 and the end of the ninth century.

[260] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', especially pp. 19–23.

[261] '[E]t dedit idem imperator Karolvs ad reliquias sanctorum apostolorum Symonis et Judae et ad monasterium illud': *UBH*, no. 38, p. 71, ll. 15–17. The charter recording Charlemagne's acquisition of Hersfeld is *Die Urkunden Pippins*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 89, pp. 128–29.

[262] 'In isto breve continentur, quicquid beatus Lvllvs archiepiscopus acquisivit': *UBH*, no. 38, p. 72, ll. 19–20.

[263] 'Et istud, quod inferius est, traditum fuit postea a liberis hominibus ad idem monasterium': *UBH*, p. 73, ll. 31–32.

section 1.[264] As in Hrabanus's compilation of the Fulda charters, the sections are subdivided into tribal districts.[265] The *pago Hassorum* appears only in the second section, the list of properties acquired by Lul before 775,[266] and therefore this section is of most interest to us here.

One of the most striking features of Fulda's eighth- and ninth-century holdings in Hessia as a whole is the conspicuous absence of land in Hessia north of the Eder, as can be seen in Map 19. Fulda was receiving lands from the Bishop of Minden, founded *c*. 800 deep inside Saxony,[267] well before it received any in the Hessian heartlands, and even these ninth-century Hessian grants formed a tight cluster immediately south of the lower Eder, between Fritzlar and Hersfeld. Of all the regions of Germania where Boniface was active, including the Thuringian frontier with Saxony, Hessia from the Eder northwards is the only district where Fulda had no recorded property.

This conspicuous void could be due to a lacuna in the cartulary tradition assembled and summarized by Eberhard. This is extremely unlikely, however, since the remainder of Hessia is well evidenced in the *Codex Eberhardi*; we would be forced to assume that an accident of transmission had erased all record of grants to Fulda between the Eder and southern Saxony while leaving the documents pertaining to neighbouring regions intact. Conversely, if this lacuna represents a genuine lack of donations to Fulda in central Hessia, what might this tell us about circumstances in the region? Why, in the generations following Boniface's mission, were the Frankish nobles and local elites who had interests at the heart of the former mission territory not following the custom of their counterparts elsewhere in Hessia and Thuringia by sponsoring Fulda?

We may throw light on this problem from another angle by considering the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*, which in its surviving form preserves a complex textual

[264] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', pp. 19–23.

[265] It is interesting to ask whether the organization of Hrabanus's cartulary and the subsections of the *Breviarium* by region was merely a method employed by the compilers, or reflected the standard archival practice of Hersfeld and Fulda. Without having original charters this question cannot be answered, although, as Peter Erhart has observed, the archivists at St Gall organized the monastery's collection of original charters according to administrative districts from at least 840. P. Erhart, '"Carta ista amalfitana est et nescitur legere": The Charters of Cava dei Tirreni and their Evidence for Early Medieval Archival Practice', *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 50 (2007), 27–39 (p. 35).

[266] *UBH*, no. 38, p. 73, ll. 15–26.

[267] Erkanbert, the first bishop of Minden (*c*. 800–13), donated numerous properties within his diocese to Fulda. See *UBF*, nos 498–502, pp. 494–95.
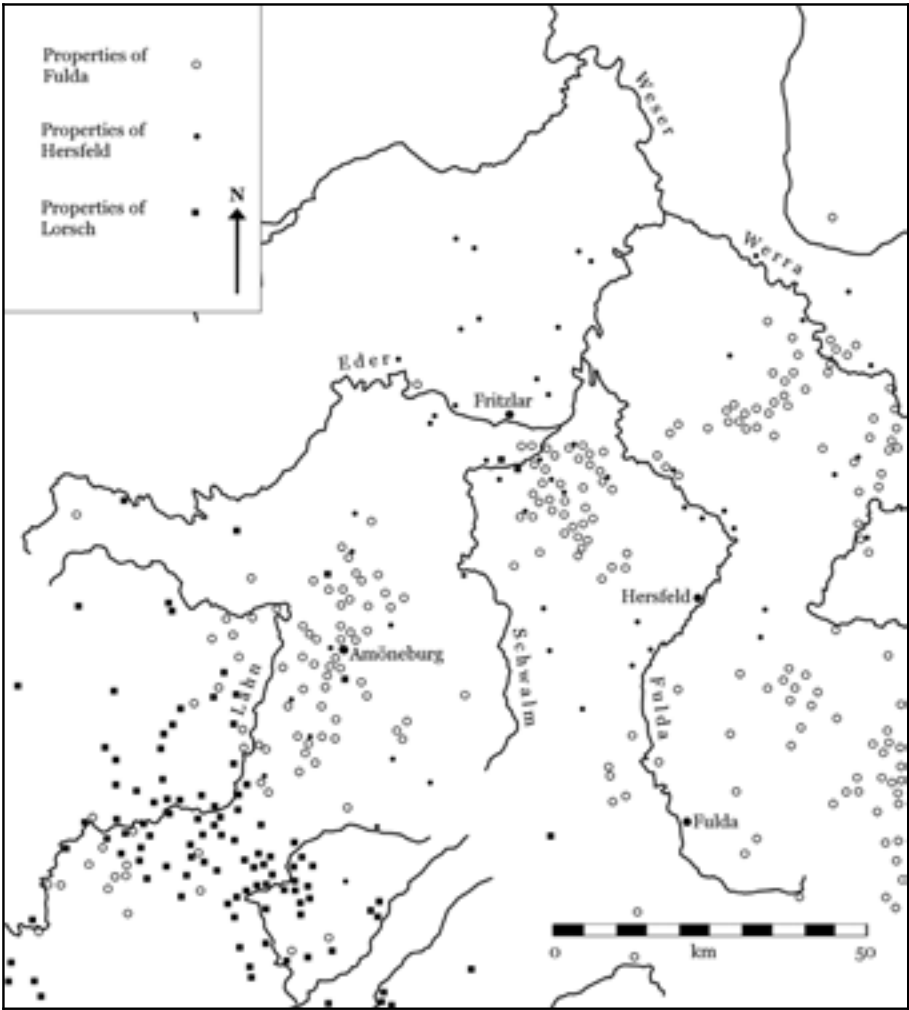
Map 19. Properties of Fulda and Herfeld. Note
especially the lack of Fulda property north of the Eder.

stratigraphy. In the second section of the *Breviarium*, those properties acquired by Lul and held by Hersfeld before 775, the tribal districts are listed in the following order: *Thuringia*; *in pago Wetreibe* (the Wetterau); *in pago Loganense* (Lahn valley); *in civitate Mogontia* (Mainz); *in pago Loganinse* (Lahn valley); and *in pago Hessorum* (Hessia).[268] In his edition of the text, Weirich emended *in pago Loganense* to *in pago Wormaciense*, believing that the double reference to the Lahn valley was due to scribal corruption.[269] Hörle, however, retained the original reading and from the double reference concluded that *in civitate Mogontia* represents the beginning of a second, originally separate, summary of Mainz's properties. The first part, comprising a large number of properties in Thuringia and a handful in the Wetterau and Lahn valley, he suspected pertained to Boniface's monastery at Ohrdruf.[270] This interpretation is supported by the different form in which properties in section 2 before and after Mainz were recorded: before Mainz, the amount of property, measured in *hubae* and *mansus*, is given for each settlement separately, with one exception;[271] after Mainz, the total amount of property in settlement groups of varying sizes is given.[272] This suggests that different methods of compilation were used in each case.

Hörle believed that Lul inherited (*acquisivit*) the properties of section 2 upon Boniface's death in 754, and passed them on *en masse* to his new foundation at Hersfeld before 775.[273] They represent, in other words, the property held by Boniface by the end of his mission. They included plots of land at thirty-three different locations in Hessia, which I have listed in Appendix 4 in the order in which they appear in the *Breviarium* and plotted, as far as they can be identified, in Map 20.

As is immediately apparent, the Hessian properties listed in the *Breviarium* can be divided into five groups, with the end of each group defined by the statement of the total amount of property within it. I have broken down the list of settlements into these groups in Appendix 4. The first group comprises

---

[268] *UBH*, no. 38, pp. 72–73.

[269] *UBH*., no. 38, p. 73, l. 8.

[270] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', pp. 25–27.

[271] At the end of the Thuringian sub-section, eleven properties are listed together (*UBH*, no. 38, p. 73, ll. 2–5).

[272] In the vicinity of Mainz, five settlements are listed together; in the Lahn valley, six properties; in Hessia, four groups of twenty-one, four, four, and three, followed by the single record for *Niwihusan* (*UBH*, no. 38, p. 73, ll. 9–25).

[273] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 26.

Map 20. Lul's properties in Hessia, showing the
internal groupings of the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*.

twenty-one properties, from Mardorf to Velmeden, the so-called *Mardorf-Reihe*; the second group is Braach, Breitingen, Bebra, and Heinebach; the third is Kirchheim, the unidentified Liutgeshusen, Ottrau, and Gründau; the fourth group consists of Treysa, Grüsen, and Wohra; finally comes the unidentified Niwihusen, which is listed alone.

If we observe the distribution of these properties in Map 20, we can see that the groups broadly correspond to geographical locales: group 1 in central Hessia (nos 1–20); group 2 along the middle Fulda (nos 22–25); group 3 in the far south of Hessia (nos 26, 28, and 29); group 4 in south-west Hessia between the Schwalm and the Wohra (nos 30–32). Niwihusen cannot be located. Hörle has also noted that group 2 is centred on the later mother church of Braach, group 3 in the archparish of Ottrau.[274]

Further layers of geographical arrangement can be identified within group 1. I have designated as group 1a properties 1 to 15 in Map 20, which begin with Mardorf in the south and end with Hebel. They are listed in a clockwise direction, with the minor slip that Verna and Borken were recorded before Sondheim, and they thus form a coherent group in themselves. Properties 16 to 21, along with Velmeden on Hessia's eastern border, are dotted around the fringe of group 1a in no particular order, and I have listed them as group 1b. Finally, group 1a can itself be broken down further according to the mother churches of central Hessia. Properties 1 to 6 and 15 lie within the archparish of Mardorf-Berge; properties 7 to 9 near Bergheim; properties 10 and 11 just south of Schützeberg; and 12 to 14 within or close to the later borders of the archparish of Gensungen.[275]

In summary, the Hessian properties which Lul had acquired before 775 show a close relationship to the medieval mother churches of Hessia, which we have already theorized represent the earliest network of missionary churches founded by Boniface. This is most clear in central Hessia, particularly around Mardorf-Berge and Bergheim. Group 1a thus consisted of properties not more than a day's walk from Fritzlar, while group 1b comprised outlying holdings.

The arrangement of the *Breviarium*, although the surviving text dates only from *c*. 815, has clearly preserved several layers of compilation that we can gradually unpeel. Section 3 could not have been written before 802, the date of the only one of its donations which is attested in an original charter.[276] Between

---

[274] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', pp. 35–36.

[275] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 36.

[276] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 22. The charter is for Cölleda (*Collide*): *UBH*, no. 21, pp. 36–38.

802 and 815, therefore, section 3 was drawn up and appended to section 2, imitating its form and arrangement, and a new opening formula was written for the whole.[277] Section 2 must have been compiled in or soon after 775, when Lul had placed Hersfeld under royal protection, for section 3 comprises all donations to Hersfeld after this date.[278] Section 2 was itself derived from two earlier summaries, one associated with Mainz and the other possibly with Ohrdruf, and these summaries may have been drawn up when Lul transferred the properties in question to Hersfeld (after 769) or when he inherited them from Boniface (754). The Mainz summary included holdings in the city and its vicinity, the Lahn valley, and Hessia. The Hessian properties were arranged according to geographical location; the largest of these groups was in central Hessia and can be further divided into core holdings (group 1a) and outlying additions (group 1b); finally, group 1a can be broken down into individual archparishes.

We know too little about early medieval scribal and archival practice north of the Alps to draw many conclusions from the multi-levelled complexity of the 'Mainz summary' sub-section of the *Breviarium*.[279] No other part of the *Breviarium* text is composed of so many layers: the 'Ohrdruf summary' part of section 2 is largely coherent in its one-settlement-one-record form, whereas the arrangement of the properties listed after Mainz appears to have included an even earlier summary of properties in central Hessia (the outliers of group 1b appended to the older core group 1a). This suggests a considerable antiquity for the donations, and it seems very possible that here we have the original land holdings of Boniface in Hessia, exactly where we would expect to find them: at the heart of his mission field. One can also compare the geographical extent of these holdings with the limits of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar and note the perfect coincidence. This suggests that the properties of the Hessian sub-section of the *Breviarium* represent those donations of land which, according to Liudger's late

---

[277] Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', p. 22.

[278] The opening formula of section 3 runs: 'Et istud, quod inferius est, traditum fuit postea a liberis hominibus ad idem monasterium' (*UBH*, no. 38, p. 73, ll. 31–32). Hörle, '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*', pp. 35–36, argued that the central Hessian properties of the *Breviarium* were included in the *res aliquae* which Lul gave to Charlemagne around 775, and which Charlemagne donated to Fritzlar in 782. He found that all of the *Breviarium* properties that lay within the archparishes of Bergheim, Gensungen, and northern Mardorf-Berge were in the possession of Fritzlar in 1209, while none was held by Hersfeld. The most likely context for the transmission of these properties from Hersfeld to Fritzlar is provided by Charlemagne's charter of 782.

[279] See Erhart, '"Carta ista amalfitana est"', p. 32.

eighth-century *Vita Gregorii*, local notables made to Boniface 'for the salvation of their souls'.[280]

Yet the record of the *Breviarium* offers nothing more than a shadowy glimpse of Boniface's local support network at the original centre of his mission field, for the names and interrelationships of the private donors are unknown. We may add a little detail to this image by turning to the charters of Fulda, specifically to a clutch of minor notables based around Amöneburg and the upper Lahn who donated various properties to Fulda between *c*. 750 and 779. The relatively early date of these donations, occurring within a generation after Boniface's death, may indicate that the donors, or their parents and grandparents, had been active supporters of Boniface's mission during his life. Since the semi-pagan district of the Amöneburg basin was an early focus of Boniface's mission, Boniface's long-term relationship with local notables here may have resembled those he nurtured in central Hessia.

As stated above, the fourth volume of Hrabanus Maurus's compilation of Fulda's charters, that pertaining to Hessia and the Lahngau, survives only in the twelfth-century summary of the *Codex Eberhardi*. The charters relating to the Amöneburg district all appear in the first part of Eberhard's summary of Volume IV, that is among the charters dating from the abbacy of Sturm (*c*. 750 to 779).[281] Eberhard supplied in each case just the name of the donor(s) and the location of the property. The lack of such valuable information as witness lists, familial relationships, terms of donation, and details of property severely limits the conclusions that can be drawn from them, but we can make some valuable observations that were not possible from the information available in the *Breviarium sancti Lulli*.

I have listed all those who donated land to Fulda in the Amöneburg district in Appendix 5 and illustrated the donated properties in Map 21. Two features of the donors listed in Appendix 5 are worth noting. First, the repetition of the element *Adel-* in the Frankish names of Adelbirc, Adelburch (who may be the same person), Adelman, Adelolt, and Adeltrud, along with the fact that their properties were almost all concentrated in the middle and upper Lahn, suggests that they represent a kinship group who were integrated into the social fabric of the Frankish middle Rhineland. The lack of defined familial relationships within the summarized charters, however, means that this cannot be confirmed.

---

[280] 'Ibique coeperunt offerentibus propter amorem Dei et salutem animarum suarum modica loca territoriaque suscipere et in eis ecclesias construere': Liudger, *Vita Gregorii*, chap. 3, p. 70, ll. 30–31.

[281] For Stengel's discussion of the dating, see *UBF*, no. 105, p. 178; the charters in question are *UBF*, nos 105–21, pp. 178–87.

Map 21. Donations to Fulda in the Amöneburg district,
showing archaeological evidence for eighth-century settlement.

Second, the donors of land in the immediate vicinity of Amöneburg were men and women of local, not regional, pretensions. Apart from the *comes* Argoz, none of them held properties on a scale comparable to that of the Rhine-Main Frankish elite. Neither Altrat nor Nenthere and his wife Hadalouch, all of whom granted land to Fulda in Rossdorf, south of Amöneburg, appear as witnesses or donors in the charter of 780–81 by which three counts, an abbess and several of their siblings defined the boundaries of Rossdorf and granted it in its entirety to Fulda.[282] Another possible indicator of Altrat's modest social status is that Charlemagne was able to assume possession of the Rossdorf property he had granted to Fulda and hold it as a royal estate until 781, when he returned it to Fulda.[283]

As is immediately clear in Map 21, both the donated lands and the early medieval settlement pattern were concentrated in the fertile basin around Boniface's early base at Amöneburg. The lands granted to Fulda in the immediate district of Amöneburg were especially concentrated. Of the sixteen properties that can be located, five were along the Rülfbach, a modest stream that joins the Ohm south of Amöneburg, and five of the thirteen recorded donors held land on its banks. The settlement of Rossdorf on the Rülfbach appears in the charters four times, nearby Rauischholzhausen three times, both appearing among the donations of Count Argoz and his wife, Lipgart. This couple also granted Fulda one-third of their estate at Affoldern on the Eder. Stengel declined to identify the settlement of Affaltráhe with Affoldern presumably because it is so far removed from the rest of Argoz and Lipgart's holdings,[284] but its precise location, just 3 kilometres west of the strategic Frankish river crossing at Bergheim, may indicate the special circumstances by which it came into their hands.

Innes has argued that by granting land to monasteries such as Fulda and Lorsch, laymen did not lose the land so much as reconfigure the influence to be derived from it within continually changing networks of power, prestige, exchange, and patronage: the church was an important social actor in such dealings, but far from the only one.[285] The fact that Count Argoz's socially inferior neigh-

---

[282] *UBF*, no. 145a, pp. 204–05; see Stengel's comment on p. 210. Since the charters of Altrat, Nenthere, and Hadalouch are not more closely datable than 750–79, it is possible that they had died by 780; the *comes* Argoz, who also held land in Rossdorf, does not appear among the *comites* of *UBF*, no. 145a, either.

[283] *UBF*, no. 147, pp. 208–13.

[284] *UBF*, p. 183 n. 7. According to Andrießen, *Siedlungsnamen*, p. 227, Affoldern is first attested 850 as *Affaltra*, from OHG *affalter*, 'apple tree'. The place-name *Affaltráhe* comprises this substantive suffixed by the generic OHG locative *-ah(i)*, often used to denote the predominance of a particular form of vegetation. See Bach, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, p. 160.

[285] Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 47–50.

bours were also very keen to patronize Fulda with lands in the settlements of Rossdorf and Rauischholzhausen might indicate some degree of social aspiration on their part, although the state of the evidence allows no certainty on this point. Nevertheless, we can see that around Amöneburg was a tight cluster of local notables who held neighbouring properties, were doubtless also connected through familial and social networks and who shared a common goal in donating land to Fulda.

If the supposition that both the *Adel-* kin group in the Lahn valley and the landholders of the Amöneburg basin were long-standing supporters of Boniface's mission is correct, observing these particular charters and the distribution of the properties they describe allows us a faint glimpse into the kind of support network that Boniface attempted to establish among prominent local leaders in his mission field. Indeed, the ancestors of the *Adel-* family may have been among those buried beneath the mounds of the Lahn valley. And is it a coincidence that the hill overlooking Affoldern on the Eder, where two of the wealthiest Amöneburg supporters of the mission happened to grant land to Fulda, is named for the archangel Michael, patron of Boniface's monastery at Amöneburg? Or could it be that these same supporters offered the community of St Michael at Amöneburg the opportunity to build a conversion-period chapel on the hill, the only surviving trace of which is the name *Michelskopf*?

Such supporters were not the equals of the Frankish elite with whom Boniface had to ingratiate himself at court, but their support, whether economic or social, was indispensable for establishing Christianity among the local population. Their donations established or reinforced links between their family and the community of the church, while many of the child oblates and potential future missionaries in Boniface's monasteries may have been donated by such middle-level landholders.[286] Winning the grassroots support of these kin-groups, hence ensuring the stability and future security of the mission, must have been one of Boniface's earliest priorities in Hessia. We have seen that Boniface at some point received property at Maden, the political and cultural centre of Hessia, and in all probability established an early minster there.[287] In 723, according to Willibald, Boniface even set one group of Hessian locals against another at the public desecration and destruction of the Oak of Jupiter. He enlisted the 'advice and assistance' of those who had accepted the sacrament of confirmation,[288] while

---

[286] Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 12–17; see also Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, pp. 142–43.

[287] See above, pp. 341–43.

[288] 'Quorum consultu atque consilio': *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 31, ll. 10–11.

those who had rejected it — apparently the weaker faction — looked on help-lessly.[289] Clearly, if defying Boniface meant defying both his local sympathizers and his Frankish sponsors, choosing one's allegiance became much more than a matter of religion; yet the very volatility of the Hessian-Saxon borderlands in the early 720s would have meant that the further one was from the Frankish-dominated Fritzlar region, the less clear-cut the choice became.

We have now examined the sacred pagan and Christian landscape of Hessia, observed the fragmentary evidence for a wide-ranging conflict over sites of particular significance, and considered the complexity of Boniface's negotiations with Frankish and local elites in establishing the political and material support base for his mission. Undoubtedly, one of his greatest accomplishments was the establishment, within two decades of his arrival in an almost entirely pagan district, of a stable parochial network that lasted for eight centuries. This in itself indicates his talents as an administrator, negotiator, and inspirational leader. Yet until the very end of his life he viewed himself first and foremost not as a reformer, but as a missionary who had vowed on the tomb of St Peter to bring the light of the Gospel to the pagan darkness beyond the Rhine.[290] We shall now turn our attention to this most fundamental of his activities in Hessia.

## The Conversion of Hessia

### Scholarship and Sources Relating to the Missionary Techniques of Boniface

Boniface, due to his fame and the wealth of early sources relating to him, frequently appears in general studies of early medieval missionary techniques. The most prominent of these studies are those by Sullivan,[291] Fletcher, Brechter, Reu, Kahl, Old, and, most recently and comprehensively, Padberg.[292] There are

---

[289] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 30, l. 19, to p. 31, l. 23.

[290] Tangl, ep. 16, p. 28, ll. 16–18.

[291] Despite Sullivan's frequently simplistic conception of the 'typical' pagan mind-set, his discussions of a broad range of sources are insightful. See in particular R. E. Sullivan, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', *Catholic Historical Review*, 42 (1956), 273–95; R. E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 705–40. Both of these articles are reprinted in Sullivan's *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994).

[292] Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 234–36; S. Brechter, 'Das Apostolat des heiligen Bonifatius und Gregors des Grossen Missionsinstruktionen für England', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 22–33; M. de Reu, 'The Missionaries: The First Contact between

no detailed contemporary accounts of missionary techniques surviving from the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon territories,[293] and these scholars have relied chiefly on hagiographical texts, historical narratives such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, and catechetical handbooks. Each of these types of sources, of course, has its own problems of interpretation. Hagiographers of missionary saints, writing with specific agendas of their own, were less interested in accurately portraying missionary techniques than in presenting their subjects as authentic inheritors of the Apostolic tradition.[294] Historians such as Bede were also far removed in time and place from the reality of evangelization, while we can never be certain of the extent to which catechetical texts such as Augustine of Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus*, Martin of Braga's *De correctione rusticorum*, and Pirmin's *Scarapsus*,[295] all of which saw widespread dissemination in the early medieval period, were followed in practice.

Within those studies devoted specifically to Boniface's mission, a great deal of attention has been paid to the nature of his missionary community, particularly the female religious who came to Germania in the later stages of the mission (none of whom appears to have been based in Hessia),[296] and the numerous social and

---

Paganism and Christianity', in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Milis, trans. by Guest, pp. 13–37; H.-D. Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtliche Mittelalters', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 11–76; H. E. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 6 vols (Cambridge: Eerdmans 1998–), III (1999), 73–142; L. E. von Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1998), pp. 190–97, and *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*.

[293] In the case of the ninth-century conversion of the Bulgars we have a clutch of letters between Rome, Constantinople, and the Bulgarian king Boris which offer valuable insights into the concerns and complexities of converting an entire people to a new faith. See R. E. Sullivan, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria: A Case Study of the Impact of Christianity on a Barbarian Society', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3 (1966), 55–139.

[294] Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 18–20.

[295] Augustine of Hippo, *De catechizandibus rudibus*, ed. by J. B. Bauer, CCSL, 46 (1969), pp. 121–78; Martin of Braga, *Cultura, Relixión e Supersticións na Galicia Sueva: Martiño de Braga 'De correctione rusticorum'*, ed. by J. E. López Pereira, Monografías, 39 (La Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, Servicio de publicaciones, 1996); Pirmin, 'Pirmins *Scarapsus*: Einleitung und Edition', ed. by E. Hauswald (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universität Konstanz, 2006) (available online at <http://www.ub.uni-konstanz.de/kops/volltexte/2006/2224/pdf/Diss_Hauswald.pdf> [accessed 21 October 2009].

[296] G. Muschiol, 'Königshof, Kloster und Mission — die Welt der Lioba und ihrer geistlichen Schwestern', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Felten, pp. 99–114; W. P. Hyland, 'Missionary Nuns and the Monastic Vocation in Anglo-Saxon England', *American Benedictine Review*, 47 (1996), 141–74;

kin relationships within the community as a whole and its supporters across the channel.[297] Padberg has focused especially on the evangelization techniques employed by Boniface in the mission field.[298]

As for primary sources, there is no evidence that Boniface used, or was even aware of, the catechetical handbooks mentioned above, although he did know some of the sermons attributed to Augustine which were of relevance to missionary work.[299] Our sources relating to his techniques of evangelization are restricted to hagiography, contemporary letters, and fifteen short sermons that are commonly attributed to him or his circle. The hagiographical sources include Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* (written between 754 and 768), Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* (late eighth century), Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* (794x800), and Lupus of Ferrières's *Vita Wigberti* (836). These sources shed varying degrees of light on the organization of Boniface's mission field, especially the monastic community of Fritzlar, but obviously must be read through a very critical lens. The letters of Boniface and Lul are far more valuable for being directly contemporary, but still have limitations: the most serious of these is the fact that they overwhelmingly comprise communications between the missionary community and the outside world, rather than within the mission community itself.

Important for our consideration here are the fifteen sermons attributed to Boniface which have been much neglected by modern Bonifatian scholars, including Padberg, and are rarely mentioned in studies of the saint. The most recent

---

Yorke, 'The Bonifacian Mission'; C. Wybourne, 'Seafarers and Stay-at-Homes: Anglo-Saxon Nuns and Mission', *Downside Review*, 114 (1996), 246–66.

[297] L. Kilger, 'Bonifatius und seine Gefährten im Missionsdienst', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 51–57; also Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 76–77; Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 50; Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*.

[298] See Chapter 5 of Padberg, *Bonifatius*, pp. 33–52; Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, passim.

[299] In Tangl, ep. 50, p. 85, ll. 8–15, Boniface quotes at length from sermon 278, *De auguriis*, concerning the evils of divination, lot-casting, and fortune-telling (Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo CCLXXVIII*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XXXIX (1846), cols 2268–71 (col. 2270). In Tangl, ep. 104, p. 228, ll. 22–23, when writing to Gemmulus in Rome, he quotes from sermon 107 concerning the nature of friendship: 'licet unus sit in oriente et alius in occidente, conglutinata caritate numquam ab invicem separantur' (Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo CVII*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XXXIX, cols 1957–59 (col. 1957)). Daniel of Winchester wrote to Boniface extensively citing Augustine's *De fide et operibus* (On faith and works), so Boniface may also have been familiar with that text. Tangl, ep. 64, p. 134, l. 35, to p. 135, l. 25; Augustine of Hippo, *De fide et operibus*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XL (1845), cols 197–230 (chap. 3, col. 200; chap. 5, col. 201; chap. 27, col. 228).

Latin printing of the sermons is Volume LXXXIX of the *Patrologia Latina* from 1850,[300] there is a rare German translation published in 1859,[301] and a recent Dutch edition of the sermons by Auke Jelsma;[302] they have been discussed and summarized in English, but not yet fully translated.[303]

The presumed authorship of Boniface was originally based on the fact that the sermons appeared in a tenth-century Mainz manuscript (now lost) alongside his grammar,[304] while the fifteenth sermon appears by itself under the title *Ammonitio sive praedicatio sancti Bonifacii episcopi de abrenuntiatione in baptismate* in a Melk homiletic manuscript from the second quarter of the ninth century[305] and in a mid-ninth-century Lorsch manuscript that also contains the penitentials attributed to Bede.[306] A dispute concerning the validity of the attribution arose between Catholic and Protestant scholars in the late nineteenth century.[307] As far as modern scholars are concerned, Padberg describes the attribution as 'highly uncertain',[308] while Rau and Aldridge, like Jelsma, are inclined to accept it as valid.[309] Old suggests that, since the 'barbarous and broken Latin' of the sermons is very different from the precise and intricate style of Boniface's letters, they could be the result of a student of Boniface translating a collection of his master's

---

[300] Anon., *Sermones*, in PL, LXXXIX (1850), cols 843–72.

[301] *Sämtliche Schriften des Heiligen Bonifacius*, ed. by Külb, II, 107–56.

[302] *Het Leven als Leerschool*, ed. and trans. by Jelsma.

[303] There is a brief English-language discussion of the sermons and a translation of the fifteenth sermon in G. F. Maclear, *A History of Christian Missions during the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863), pp. 429–31; for a fuller and more recent discussion, see Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, III, 128–37.

[304] The manuscript was lost by the late nineteenth century, but was the basis for the edition of the sermons by Martène and Durand that was reprinted by Migne. See H. Hahn, 'Die angeblichen Predigten des Bonifaz', *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, 24 (1884), 583–625 (p. 625).

[305] Melk, Benediktinerstiftes Melk, Cod. 597, fols 114ʳ–115ʳ.

[306] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Lat. Palat. 485.

[307] R. Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Dermold: Meyer, 1879), p. 28, eagerly attributed the sermons to Boniface, while the evangelical theologian Heinrich Hahn was a prominent critic of this view: Hahn, 'Die angeblichen Predigten'. His objections were in turn sharply countered by A. J. Nürnberger, 'Die angebliche Unechtheit der Predigten des hl. Bonifatius', *Neues Archiv*, 14 (1889), 109–34.

[308] Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 46.

[309] Rau, *Briefe des Bonifatius*, pp. 373–74; R. E. Aldridge, 'The Lost Ending of the Didache', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 53 (1999), 1–15 (pp. 8–9 n. 20).

sermons from the spoken vernacular.[310] Although the authorship of the extant sermons is uncertain, they nonetheless appear to be connected to Boniface's mission both textually, through their Continental transmission alongside his *Ars grammatica*, and in tone, in that the sermons are clearly tailored to give simple, prosaic explanations of proper Christian doctrine and behaviour to an audience of recently baptized adults. Since they primarily concern techniques of post-baptismal instruction, we shall return to them, below, pp. 380–87.

## The Organization of Missionary Parties

Only in two cases can we reliably reconstruct part of a group active in Boniface's mission field: first, the community at Fritzlar in the late 740s; second, the expedition led by Boniface to Frisia in 754. To deal with Fritzlar first, our information is derived from a letter of Boniface to the monks of Fritzlar after the death of Wigbert, their first abbot, in 746/47.[311] Boniface, possibly writing from Mainz,[312] divided the chief duties of the monastery among seven named brethren, including two priests and at least one deacon (Megingoz, later bishop of Würzburg). Aside from the abbacy itself, the duties included the expounding of the monastic rule, organizing the correct daily offices, teaching the child oblates and other monks, administering the servants (*servos nostros*), running the kitchen and organizing any necessary construction work.[313]

There is no indication in this letter of Fritzlar's involvement in the outside world, but it does confirm that the monastery housed oblates, just as, according to Eigil, it had housed the youth Sturm some twenty years earlier.[314] Eigil, writing between fifteen and twenty-one years after Sturm's death (779), stated that Sturm spent almost three years preaching among the people of Hessia after his ordination *c*. 734, and other oblates at Fritzlar may have had a similar career, perhaps

[310] Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, III, 128–29. Because of the continuing debate, I have listed the sermons in my bibliography under 'Anonymous'.

[311] Tangl, ep. 40, p. 64 n. 1, dates the letter to 737/38, but Beumann, 'Hersfelds Gründungs-jahr', pp. 9–12, argues convincingly for a date of 746/47. See the discussion above, Chapter 5, pp. 200–03.

[312] By 746 Boniface had assumed the bishopric of Mainz following the expulsion of Gewilib in 745 (Tangl, ep. 60, p. 124, ll. 5–8), and he may have been organizing the affairs of his newly acquired see when Wigbert died.

[313] Tangl, ep. 40, p. 65.

[314] *Vita Sturmi*, chaps 3–4, p. 366, l. 42, to p. 367, l. 6.

joining missionary expeditions to the frontier along with Anglo-Saxon monks such as Wiehtberht.[315] Above all, the letter written by Boniface to the Fritzlar community in 746/47 demonstrates the close control he maintained over the central foundation of his Hessian mission field during the last years of his life, and his strong desire that a regular life be maintained there amidst the continued turbulence of the Hessian-Saxon borderlands.

Concerning Boniface's final Frisian mission, Willibald carefully named the principal missionary companions of Boniface: the *chorepiscopus* Eoban, four priests, three deacons, and four monks, although there was also a support staff of about forty who may not have been directly involved in evangelizing.[316] This expedition, however, was thoroughly untypical in its size, and most missionary parties would have been much smaller. By way of comparison, Richard Sullivan has observed how in both late eighth-century Carinthia (in modern-day southern Austria) and northern Frisia small parties of missionaries, in the case of Carinthia numbering two or three priests with supporting clerics, undertook rotating expeditions into pagan territory, returning at regular intervals to their base of operations (the episcopal seats of Salzburg and Utrecht respectively).[317]

If Boniface devised a similar scheme for Hessia, the obvious initial mission bases would have been Büraburg and the minster at Fritzlar, for these were the most secure and long-established ecclesiastical centres in the region. The monastery at Büraburg could comfortably house a community of only six monks and

---

[315] Tangl, ep. 101, pp. 224–25.

[316] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 8, p. 47, l. 21, to p. 48, l. 6. Following the deaths at Dokkum of Boniface and his missionary party in 754, there appears to have been understandable confusion concerning the precise number of martyrs. The nearest contemporary reference to the massacre is in a letter written shortly after the event by Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury, who mentions the numerous servants ('plurimis domesticis') who died with Boniface, but does not give their number (Tangl, ep. 111, p. 239, ll. 25–26). The Fulda Martyrology records that fifty companions died with Boniface at Dokkum, including Eoban and the priest *Adalhard* (called *Æthelheri* by Willibald). Anon., *E Martyrologio Fuldensi*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii*, ed. by Levison, pp. 59–61 (p. 60, ll. 6–9). According to the *Continuatio Bedae* the number of martyred companions was fifty-three (*Venerabilis Bedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, p. 362), while the anonymous *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, ed. by A. Hofmeister, in MGH SS, 30. 2 (1926), pp. 789–95 (p. 792, ll. 7–10), puts the number of martyred companions at fifty-two. For a comparative discussion of the portrayals of Boniface's death in the various *vitae Bonifatii*, see M.-A. Aris, 'Erzähltes Sterben: Der Tod des Bonifatius im Spiegel der Bonifatiusviten', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 111–26.

[317] Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary', p. 709.

their abbot, whereas Fritzlar in 746/47 was home to at least six senior monks and an unknown number of subordinates and oblates.[318] From central Hessia, small parties of missionaries, comprising both experienced priests and younger, less experienced clerics, could reach the pagan inhabitants of the Diemel valley within a day, spend several more days preaching throughout the district, and return to Büraburg or Fritzlar without requiring a permanent base in the north. As the Christianization of the borderlands progressed, the maximum reach of the missionaries could be pushed ever farther into the Hessian-Saxon borderlands.

Thus the possibly Bonifatian churches of St John the Baptist at Wichdorf and St Peter at Hasungen would have been well situated as missionary centres for Hessia north of Fritzlar, while the minster at Schützeberg would have given missionary parties easy access to Saxon communities on the far side of the Diemel. The account of Wiehtberht of Glastonbury, indeed, seems to describe exactly this type of itinerant missionary activity on the Hessian-Saxon borders.[319] He and his companions may also have regularly visited those remote hilltop chapels whose existence deep in the borderlands we have surmised from the toponymic evidence: Simonskopf, Michelskopf, Petersholz, Petershöhe, and the two Petersbergs.

### Pre-baptismal Instruction

In his letter to the monks of Glastonbury, Wiehtberht does not describe the precise nature of his preaching among the pagan Hessians and Saxons, except to request prayers from his distant brethren that 'utterance may be given us in the opening of our mouth, and the fruits of our labour might be permanent'.[320] In its silence concerning the material and techniques of missionary preaching, this letter, despite having been written by someone directly involved in such activity, is typical of our sources. The letter that Daniel of Winchester wrote to Boniface at the beginning of his Hessian mission is less typical, indeed unique.[321] Daniel not only imagined Boniface engaged in extended theological debate with pagans, but offered plentiful advice on how to win them over. The discourse imagined by Daniel centred on the nature of the pagan and Christian gods (primarily their

---

[318] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 205–06.

[319] Tangl, ep. 101, pp. 224–25.

[320] '[O]rate 'pro nobis, ut detur nobis sermo in aperione oris' et permanentia in opere ac fructus': Tangl, ep. 101, p. 224, ll. 27–28.

[321] Tangl, ep. 23, pp. 38–41.

origin),[322] the material benefits to be won from conversion to Christianity and the general superiority of Christian civilization.[323]

Historians have often viewed Daniel's letter as a naive, derivative literary fantasy that was of limited relevance to missionary work, and Padberg supposes that Daniel's abstract theological meanderings, though perhaps of some use to preachers, were 'on an intellectual level [which] would hardly have been suitable for the horizons of simple people'.[324] It is true that Daniel was writing from the point of view of older Mediterranean writers, but, as Fletcher points out, the very fact of the letter's preservation implies that it was found to be of some use,[325] while Boniface's ownership of a copy of Agnellus's *De ratione fidei*, a sixth-century defence of the Catholic faith against Arianism found in the so-called *Ragyndrudis Codex*,[326] suggests that he found some use for a text which gave a careful explication of the origin and nature of the Trinity.[327] We should also be wary of the assumption that preliterate pagans were necessarily incapable of theological abstraction.

One insight of Daniel's letter that is especially relevant to our reconstruction of the context of Boniface's mission in Hessia is his equation of religious difference with political confrontation. He wrote:

> This point is also to be made: if the gods are all-powerful, beneficent, and just, they not only reward their worshippers but punish those who reject them. If, then, they do this in temporal matters, how is it that they spare us Christians who are turning almost the whole earth away from their worship and overthrowing their idols?[328]

Such observations would have meant something to Hessians living on the militarized fringe of Frankish territory, especially after Boniface's demolition of Jupiter's Oak at Geismar in 723 dramatically illustrated the temporal superiority

---

[322] Tangl, ep. 23, p. 39, l. 5, to p. 40, l. 12.

[323] Tangl, ep. 23, p. 40, ll. 5–12.

[324] Padberg, *Bonifatius*, p. 45. See also Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, pp. 322–27. For the similar view of Schieffer, see *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 147.

[325] Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 242.

[326] Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bonifatianus 2, fols 34$^v$–39$^v$.

[327] See J. Huhn, 'Der Agnellus-Brief *De ratione fidei* nach einer Handschrift im Codex Bonifatianus II', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 102–38.

[328] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 27; 'Hoc quoque inferendum: Si omnipotentes sunt dii et benefici et iusti, non solum suos remunerant cultores, verum etiam puniunt contemptores. Et si haec utraque temporaliter faciunt, cur ergo parcunt christianis totum pene orbem ab eorum cultura avertentibus idolaque evertentibus?': Tangl, ep. 23, p. 40, ll. 20–24.

of Frankish-sponsored Christianity over Hessian paganism. As we saw above, Boniface and his missionaries appear to have followed a policy of confronting pagan shrines across Hessia, not merely in the Fritzlar region. The scenes of division and provocation at Geismar may have been repeated at Maden, Hasungen, and any number of similar places.

Once the leaders of a local community had demonstrated their willingness to accept baptism, the process of pre-baptismal instruction could begin. No source outlines the nature of the catechism devised by Boniface for his mission field, and, as already noted, there is no evidence that he used any of the catechetical handbooks known in the early medieval period. Nor do we know how closely, if at all, he employed the intricate seven-stage catechism that preceded Easter baptism in the Roman rite.[329] The surviving letters, however, do give us some idea of what he regarded as the essential knowledge and understanding of the baptismal candidate. Where the question of baptism arises in the letters, it is generally in connection to people who had been baptized by morally compromised priests, or by priests who were guilty of sacrificing to pagan gods. In such cases, Boniface's chief concern tended to be whether or not the Trinity had been correctly invoked during the ritual.[330]

Boniface's view of the importance of the trinitarian invocation was no different in principle to that of the Pope and other supporters of Roman orthodoxy, although his need for grammatical accuracy in the baptismal formula was pedantic even by the standards of his peers.[331] As long as the priest had invoked the Trinity

---

[329] On these seven *scrutinia* that preceded baptism, see A. Angenendt, 'Der Taufritus im frühen Mittelalter', in *Segni et riti nella chiesa altomediovale occidentale*, SSCI, 33 (1987), pp. 275–321 (pp. 275–79).

[330] Tangl, ep. 80, p. 175, ll. 3–12.

[331] In 739 Pope Gregory III advised Boniface that Bavarian baptisms where the Trinity had been invoked in the vernacular were valid, but that he should confirm the baptized individuals to be sure (Tangl, ep. 45, p. 73, ll. 4–7). One cannot help but wonder whether Boniface nonetheless directed all Bavarian priests to use Latin in their baptismal formulas even where they had no command of the tongue, for seven years later he ordered the re-baptism of all those who had been baptized by an illiterate priest who gave a grammatically faulty Latin invocation of the Trinity. The priests Virgilius and Sedonius appealed to Pope Zacharias against Boniface's command, and the Pope supported them (Tangl, ep. 68, pp. 140–41). See also Angenendt, 'Der Taufritus', pp. 290–91, 299–300; P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages*, *c. 200–c. 1150* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially pp. 185–220; K. Guenther, 'Defining and Shaping the Moral Self in the Ninth Century: Evidence from the Baptismal Tracts and the Reception of Augustine's *De Trinitate*' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of York, 2006); S. A. Keefe, *Water and the Word: Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian*

and annointed the catechumenate, the baptized person was a member of the Christian family — 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism',[332] as Saint Paul wrote to the Ephesians — and God's Grace could be neither revoked nor regranted. There was more to the ritual of baptism than the invocation of the Trinity, however, as is shown in a case from 726 where a Hessian or Thuringian priest had baptized individuals without the standard interrogation of faith.[333] These baptisms remained valid, but Pope Gregory urged Boniface to ensure that the new Christians understood what their profession entailed.

Although Boniface customarily invoked the Trinity in Latin when baptizing in Germania,[334] the baptismal oaths themselves must have been taken in the vernacular. The closest example of a baptismal formula to the context of Boniface's mission is the late eighth-century Old Saxon text of the *Abrenuntio diaboli*,[335] which may have been adapted from a formula used by Boniface and his missionaries in Hessia and Thuringia. The *Abrenuntio* falls into two parts, with the first three questions and responses confirming the rejection of the Devil (the Latin loan-word *diabolae* is used), of devil worship (*diabolgeldae*), and of the Devil's works (*diaboles uuercum*),[336] following which, in an addition to the

---

*Empire*, I: *A Study of Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), especially pp. 1–9.

[332] '[U]nus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma': Ephesians 4. 5. Cf. Pope Gregory II to Boniface in Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, l. 24: 'unus Deus, una fides, unum baptisma'.

[333] 'Enimvero quosdam baptizatos absque interrogatione simbuli ab adulteris et indignis presbiteris fassus es' (You mention also that some have been baptized by adulterous or unworthy priests without being questioned whether they believe, as is the ritual): Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 18–26 ; *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 32.

[334] Not until he began his reform of the Bavarian church *c.* 736 did Boniface encounter priests invoking the Trinity in the vernacular during baptism, which suggests that he instructed his own priests in Hessia and Thuringia to use Latin (Tangl, ep. 45, p. 73, ll. 4–7).

[335] Anon., *Interrogationes*, p. 222. The manuscript in which the *Abrenuntio diaboli* is preserved is Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Lat. Palat. 577, fol. 6ᵛ; see Bischoff, 'Paläolgraphische Fragen', pp. 109–11.

[336] Both Eggers and Green have remarked that Old English made virtually no discernible impact on the Continental Germanic languages in the area of Christian terminology. It appears that the Anglo-Saxon missionaries merely adopted the Christian vocabulary that had already been established in the Frankish, Old High German–speaking areas of the Rhine, which in turn implies that the Franks had been more active in evangelization than the Bonifatian hagiography suggests. H. Eggers, 'Die Annahme des Christentums im Spiegel der deutschen Sprachgeschichte', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 466–504 (pp. 498–99); D. H. Green, 'The Influence of the Merovingian Franks on the Christian Vocabulary of German', in

standard trinitarian formula, Thunaer, Woden, and Saxnôt are rejected by name. The second part is an affirmation of belief in each member of the Trinity, *fadaer*, *suno*, and *halogan gast*.[337]

The baptismal oath was supposed to be a pivot in the life of the convert, the moment where 'the old man' was put off and 'the new Christ' was put on.[338] The newly baptized were to understand that they were not merely converting, but diverting: the acceptance of Christ necessarily involved the reconceptualization and rejection of the old ways, and in the case of the Saxons this was reinforced by the naming of their three principal gods. For a full understanding of the baptismal oath, therefore, the Hessian catechumenate had to be taught that the indigenous gods were not gods at all, but malevolent demons — this they had been hearing since the very first addresses of the missionaries — and they also needed to know something about the nature of the Trinity; Boniface's copy of Agnellus's *De ratione fidei* would have proved useful here. In other words, they did not need to know very much about Christianity at all.

## Post-baptismal Instruction and the Sacrament of Confirmation

There is no doubt that Boniface desired every Christian to be as thoroughly instructed in matters of correct behaviour and belief as possible. Yet there may not always have been time to organize instruction on a sufficient scale when large numbers of people were to be baptized at once, for example in central Hessia in 721/22,[339] and on the Saxon borderlands in 738/39.[340] Padberg has defined three

---

*Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by I. N. Wood (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 343–59; Green, *Language and History*, pp. 355–56.

[337] Anon., *Interrogationes*, p. 222.

[338] Cf. Gregory II's command to the Old Saxons, alluding to Colossians 3. 9–10: 'Expoliate ergo vos veterum hominem et induite Christum novum' (Tangl, ep. 21, p. 36, ll. 4–5).

[339] See Willibald's claim in his *Vita Bonifatii* that Boniface baptized 'many thousands' soon after he arrived in Hessia: 'Multisque milibus hominum expurgata paganica vetustate baptizatis' (*Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 27, ll. 8–9). Willibald's account is supported by an optimistic letter of 724 from Gregory II to Boniface, in which he congratulated Boniface on his progress: 'praedicationis praeconio populum infidelium, ut innotuisti, audivimus converti [...]. Hinc enim nobis merces copiosa credimus quod ab omnipotente Domino adscribatur in caelo': Tangl, ep. 24, p. 42, ll. 9–10.

[340] See Gregory III's acknowledgement that Boniface had freed 'as many as one hundred thousand souls from the power of the pagans' (Deus noster de potestate paganorum liberavit et ad centum milia animas in sinu sanctae matris ecclesiae [...] aggregare dignatus est'): Tangl, ep. 45, p. 72, ll. 3–5.

fundamental features of Boniface's perception of himself as a missionary preacher: first, his dense familiarity with biblical sources; second, his unremitting desire to promulgate the decrees of God; third, his recognition of the importance of post-baptismal teaching and ecclesiastical structures free of moral and doctrinal corruption.[341] Nothing illustrates Boniface's emphasis on the importance of thoroughly instructing recent converts better than his promotion and promulgation of the rite of confirmation by the laying-on of hands.

As already discussed in Chapter 3,[342] performing itinerant post-baptismal confirmations was, in the view of Bede, one of the fundamental duties of Anglo-Saxon bishops.[343] Such a custom was an integral part of the Roman baptismal rite by the fifth century, but was largely ignored by the Frankish church until the Anglo-Saxon missionaries, most of all Boniface, introduced it.[344] According to Willibald, the first thing Boniface did upon returning to Hessia as a newly consecrated bishop in 723 was confirm those whom he had baptized over the previous two years.[345] Confirmation, not baptism, thus defined the crucial dramatic moment in Boniface's early mission; many of those Hessians who had willingly accepted the first sacrament baulked at the second,[346] and local society had become split according to religious (and perhaps political) affiliation. Upon witnessing the miraculous destruction of the Oak of Jupiter by a godly breath of wind, so claimed Willibald, the Hessian apostates at once realized the error of their ways.[347] We may be forgiven for suspecting that the reality was not quite so simple.

---

[341] Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, p. 337. Padberg bases his conclusions on Boniface's letter of 747 to Archibishop Cuthbert of Canterbury, in which Boniface deliberated at length on the nature his own role as a servant of the church (Tangl, ep. 78, pp. 161–70).

[342] See Chapter 3, above, pp. 113–17.

[343] Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, p. 410.

[344] Angenendt, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter*, pp. 471–73; Angenendt, 'Der Taufritus', pp. 309–13; Garrison, 'The Franks as the New Israel?', p. 138. The Frankish rite of anointing the hands of priests and bishops at their consecration, the earliest liturgical sources for which are early eighth-century in date, also appears to be Insular in origin. See Kleinheyer, *Die Priesterweihe im römischen Ritus*, pp. 86–87. On the possible influence of post-baptismal anointing on Carolingian royal anointing rituals, see Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed', pp. 149–53.

[345] 'Hessorum iam multi, catholica fide subditi ac septiformis spiritus gratia confirmati, manus inpositionem acciperunt': *Vita Bonifatii*, p. 30, l. 19, to p. 31, l. 1.

[346] '[A]lii quidem, nondum animo confortati, intemeratae fidei documenta integre percipere rennuerunt': *Vita Bonifatii*, p. 30, ll. 1–3.

[347] 'Quo viso, prius devotantes pagani etiam versa vice benedictionem Domino, pristina abiecta maledictione, credentes reddiderunt': *Vita Bonifatii*, p. 30, ll. 23–26.

Willibald was writing forty or so years after the event, but Gregory III's promotion of Boniface to archbishop in 732, along with the specific instruction that he should ordain more bishops to cover his mission field, may have been prompted by Boniface's intention to apply the sacrament of confirmation across a wider territory than he could manage alone.[348] That Boniface sought to introduce the rite of post-baptismal confirmation as standard practice in the Frankish church is apparent from its appearance ten years later in the decrees of the Concilium Germanicum, which could only be due to his influence. The decree in question stated that bishops, according to canon law, were to perform the regular laying-on of hands at settlements throughout their dioceses.[349] This practice was clearly derived from a custom similar to that desired by Bede to be uniformly implemented in Northumbria,[350] but which, judging from its introduction in Francia by Boniface, was known in early eighth-century Wessex as well.

If we wish to know something of the contents of Boniface's post-baptismal teaching, we can turn to the fifteen sermons discussed above, which, if not written by Boniface himself, at least originated in the context of his Germanic mission field. The titles of the sermons are as follows (below I give the English titles used by Old):[351]

1) On the true faith[352]
2) On the origin of the human condition[353]
3) On justice toward God and justice toward our neighbours[354]
4) On the eight Beatitudes[355]
5) On faith and good works[356]

---

[348] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 3–10. See Cramer, *Baptism and Change*, pp. 179–84; Angenendt, 'Der Taufritus', pp. 312–13.

[349] 'Et quandocumque iure canonico episcopus circumeat parrochiam populos ad confirmandos, presbiter semper paratus sit ad suscipiendum episcopum cum collectione et adiutorio populi, qui ibi confirmari debet': Tangl, ep. 56, p. 100, ll. 10–13.

[350] Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*, p. 410.

[351] Old, *The Reading and the Preaching of the Scriptures*, p. 129.

[352] 'De fide recta': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 843C–845B.

[353] 'De origine humanae conditionis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 845C–847D.

[354] 'De gemina iustitiae operatione': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 847D–850B.

[355] 'De octo beatitudinibus evangelicis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 850B–852B.

[356] 'De fide et operibus dilectionis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 852B–855A.

6)   On the worst sins and the most important teachings of God[357]

7)   On faith and love[358]

8)   On the quality of life here below and on the quality of the life to come[359]

9)   What must be avoided if we are to please God[360]

10)  On the incarnation of the Son of God and the redemption of man[361]

11)  On the two kingdoms[362]

12)  Exhortation to keep the Lenten fast[363]

13)  Why the Lenten fast is so important[364]

14)  A sermon for Easter[365]

15)  On the baptismal renunciation[366]

The sermons are repetitive and written in straightforward, unimaginative language. Theological matters are not expanded upon, lengthy biblical citations are rare, and no allegories are employed. In the opinion of Old, they resemble rough reproductions of sermons delivered over several weeks rather than a coherent series in themselves, while the focus of the final four suggests that the sermons as a whole were delivered around Lent for the edification of recent converts who were being recalled to their baptismal vows.[367]

---

[357] 'De capitalibus peccatis et praecipuis Dei praeceptis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 855B–856C.

[358] 'De fide et caritate': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 856D–858A.

[359] 'Qualiter hic vivatur, qualiter in futurum vivendum sit': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 858A–860A.

[360] 'Qui actus sint omni studio evitandi, et qui tot virium instantia sectandi': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 860A–862A.

[361] 'De incarnatione filii Dei et humani generis reparatione': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 862A–863C.

[362] 'De duobus regnis a Deo statutis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 863C–864D.

[363] 'Exhortatio de jejuniis quadragesimae': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 865A–866D.

[364] 'Quare jejunia quadragesimae magis aliis jejuniis veneranda sit': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 867A–868B.

[365] 'In die solemnitatis paschalis': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 868B–870A.

[366] 'De abrenuntiatione in baptismate': Anon., *Sermones*, PL, LXXXIX, cols 870A–872A.

[367] Old, *The Reading and the Preaching of the Scriptures*, p. 130.

The suitability of the sermon's teachings for a lay audience still prone to pre-Christian beliefs and customs is clear, while the author appears to assume that the listeners were baptized as adults, hence were first-generation Christians. Overwhelmingly the emphasis is on behaviour, not belief, although in sermon 15, 'On the baptismal renunciation', the standard list of wicked deeds from the Way of Death of the Didache — pride, idolatry, murder, perjury, and so on — is supplemented by 'belief in witches and werewolves'.[368] The ditches dug around settlements which were condemned in the *Indiculus superstitionum* may have been intended to defend against such supernatural beasts as these,[369] and thus we return to behaviour: in some cases, behaviour was very hard to alter unless belief was altered first. In this sermon we also see the same formulaic condemnation of *incantationes et sortilegos* that Pope Gregory III expressed to the peoples of Germania in 738,[370] and that appears in both the *Indiculus superstitionum*[371] and the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*.[372] Clearly the audience of the sermons had a long way to go to meet Boniface's standards.

In 726, three years after the first confirmations in Hessia took place, Gregory II replied to a query of Boniface that it was not proper to place two or three chalices on the altar when celebrating Mass.[373] Quite why Boniface was doing this is unclear, but, considering that he appears to have gained a great many converts very rapidly during his early years in Hessia, the reason may have been that the sheer size of his congregations was overwhelming his limited missionary staff. A shortage of competent missionary priests was still a serious problem twenty-five years later, when Boniface wrote a letter to Archbishop Egbert of York concerning a priest who had been punished for having sexual relations, but had been restored to his office and was living 'in an exceedingly large district of believers'.[374] The priest was apparently ministering to recent converts from paganism, for Boniface stated that the population was 'prone to error', and would die pagan (*paganus*) if denied a priest; however, he feared that should the priest be left in

---

[368] '[S]trigas et fictos lupos credere': Anon., *Sermones*, col. 870. See above, pp. 280–91.

[369] This is the opinion of Boretius in his edition of the *Indiculus superstitionum* (p. 222 n. 16).

[370] 'Divinos autem vel sortilegos [...] omnino respuentes': Tangl, ep. 43, p. 69, ll. 12–16.

[371] Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, p. 222, ll. 12, 14.

[372] Anon., *Capitulatio*, chap. 23, p. 69, l. 45.

[373] 'Unde congruum non est duo vel tres calices in altario ponere, cum missarum sollempnia celebrantur': Tangl, ep. 26, p. 46, ll. 5–6.

[374] '[I]n latissimo pago fidelium': Tangl, ep. 91, p. 207, l. 30.

place and his sinful past become known, the people would become disillusioned by the priests's hypocrisy and the mission as a whole would be damaged.[375]

Even if Boniface had regarded the priest in question as morally sound, the influence of the latter over such a large area must have been limited. Away from the centre of the priest's parish, in the villages, isolated huts, and farmsteads where he rarely visited, the daily behaviour of the ordinary people would have been almost impossible to observe and control. Shines on major transit routes could be destroyed easily enough, but the manifestations of paganism were not restricted to such obvious and easy targets.[376] Feasts and processions such as those condemned in the *Indiculus superstitionum* could be disrupted, for sure, but a cleric would have to think very carefully before intervening in an important social event,[377] especially when it involved the consumption of copious amounts of alcohol.[378] Superstitions and customs on a smaller scale created problems of their own: how could the priest have asked a community simply to stop believing in witches and werewolves, and to lower its time-accustomed guard against such evils on blind faith? How could the priest prevent the use of idols of bread and cloth,[379] or wooden hands and feet,[380] when such objects could simply be stuffed under a mattress as soon as he came near?

The degree to which Boniface and his missionaries were able to influence the daily behaviour of recent converts in Hessia cannot be ascertained from the available evidence, although we might expect that they had more success in central Hessia, where there appears to have been a network of Bonifatian minsters, than on the Saxon borderlands or in the remoter valleys. The eighth Bonifatian sermon gives a patient explanation of the importance of confession and penance, a sacrament which, for the innumerable peasant converts of Hessia, placed the local priest at the centre of a new and potentially inexplicable moral universe. He was to be the immediate judge of what was good or not good, the enforcer of all those

---

[375] Tangl, ep. 97, p. 208, ll. 9–17.

[376] Wood, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions', p. 264.

[377] E. Duckett, *The Wandering Saints* (London: Collins, 1959), pp. 197–99; Wood, 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions', p. 259.

[378] Boniface, when advising Cuthbert of Canterbury to reduce the amount of drunkenness in the churches of his archbishopric, remarked that excessive consumption of alcohol was a notable trait of the *pagani* of Germania (Tangl, ep. 78, p. 171, ll. 16–18).

[379] 'De simulacro de consparsa farina'; 'De simulacris de pannis factis': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, p. 223, ll. 26–27.

[380] 'De ligneis pedibus vel manibus pagano ritus': Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, p. 223, l. 29.

alien and arbitrary decrees which messengers brought in satchels from distant
Rome. Why, converts might have asked him — and surely did — were they no
longer permitted to eat horse flesh? Was it not enough that they had sworn loyalty
to Christ and cursed the old gods as demons, that they came to his church and said
their prayers?

Where there was no frustration, there was always the danger of confusion.
Religious conversion on a mass scale always provides rich soil for misunder-
standing, especially if the missionaries have neither the time nor the inclination
to till deep into the native cosmology. When Daniel of Winchester called pagan
myths and customs 'absurd' and 'disgusting', this was not mere affectation.[381]
Nothing in Boniface's letters leads us to imagine that he treated pagan traditions
with any more sensitivity than expedience demanded. There is some evidence that
syncretic behaviour had developed in his mission field before 732, when he asked
Gregory III whether or not his flock were allowed to bring offerings to church for
their dead pagan kin. 'The teaching of the Holy Church', Gregory replied, 'is that
anyone may make offerings for his truly Christian dead.'[382] Relatives of departed
pagans were out of luck: ties of blood to former, non-Christian generations were,
in the eyes of the church, now cut. This apparent desire of recent converts to
maintain contact with their pagan ancestors even after baptism is reminiscent of
the episode in the *Vita Vulframni* (written 796x807) where King Radbod of
Frisia, upon being told that baptism would separate him from his forebears in the
afterlife, stepped away from the font.[383] Similar evidence for syncretic religious
behaviour focusing on Christian sites appears in Carloman's decrees of 742 and
in the *Indiculus superstitionum*, where we learn of unspecified *sacrilegia* performed
in churches and on graves, and of pagan sacrifices made in the name of the saints.[384]

While such behaviour struck certain clerics as wholly un-Christian, for the
laypeople it was the natural continuation of their old way of life, a mere re-
orientation of existing religiosity, and even those who regularly attended Mass
were bound to traipse in old superstitions and customs on their rustic feet.
Social ceremonies were, after all, vital to the stability and perpetuation of the

---

[381] Tangl, ep. 23, p. 40, ll. 13–19.

[382] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 36; 'Sancta sic tenet ecclesia, ut quisque
pro suis mortuis vere christianis offerat oblationes': Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, l. 29, to p. 51, l. 4.

[383] Pseudo-Iona, *Vita Vulframni episcopi Senonici auctore Pseudo-Iona*, ed. by W. Levison, in
*Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici III*, ed. by Krusch and Levison, pp. 657–73 (chap.
9, p. 668, ll. 1–14). See also Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 92; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*,
p. 406.

[384] Tangl, ep. 56, p. 100, ll. 21–31; Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*, p. 222, ll. 2, 5, 9.

community, regardless of whatever explicit or implicit pagan customs they involved. If Boniface and his companions attempted to restrict particular customs because of their perceived pagan overtones, the result might have been that the old patterns of behaviour simply reappeared in unpredictable, superficially Christian forms. It would have taken much more than occasional sermons, dramatic violations of pagan shrines and the proscriptions of a distant ruler to un-pick and re-knit a pagan world view into something resembling the one that the Anglo-Saxon missionaries had learned through years of strict monastic education.

## Maintaining Control of the Mission Field

Despite the evidence for his establishment of a network of minsters in central Hessia, we should question how much control Boniface had over preaching activity in his mission territory as a whole, particularly on the Saxon borderlands and where his territory conjoined that of Milo of Trier in the upper Lahn.[385] He was dealing with morally corrupt priests in his mission field from at least 726, when the issue first appears in a letter of Gregory II.[386] Since there is no evidence for pre-Bonifatian churches in Hessia beyond Büraburg and Bergheim, this instance more probably relates to the expansion of Boniface's mission into neighbouring Thuringia from 723, where there was already a badly neglected church structure, or to the region of the upper Lahn, where there were Frankish priests associated with the archbishopric of Trier.[387] By 732, Boniface was having to deal with the wholly different problem of non-trinitarian baptisms performed by pagans (*pagani*) and by priests who had sacrificed to Jupiter (i.e., Thunaer) and eaten pagan sacrificial foods.[388] These cases seem to be examples of syncretic behaviour that had developed on the interface of Christianity and paganism, and may even be evidence that some pagans were devising their own forms of pseudo-Christian 'baptism' in response to the spread of Boniface's mission.

From at least the late 740s, Boniface appears to have had great difficulty in preventing access to certain districts by preachers unconnected to his mission,

---

[385] See Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 266.

[386] Tangl, ep. 26, p. 47, ll. 3–14.

[387] See Chapter 4, above, pp. 177–84.

[388] 'Eosdemque, quos a paganis baptizatos esse asseruisti, si ita habetur, ut denuo baptizes in nomine trinitatis, mandamus': Tangl, ep. 28, p. 50, ll. 22–23. From the same letter: 'Nam et eos, qui se dubitant fuisse baptizatos an non vel qui a presbitero Iovi mactanti et immolaticias carnes vescenti, ut baptizentur, precipimus' (ibid., p. 51, ll. 5–7).

whom he did not regard as remotely qualified for the task of spreading the Gospel. Late in 747 or early in 748 he complained to Zacharias about these self-professed priests and bishops, who included 'false vagrants, adulterers, murderers, effeminates, pederasts, blasphemers, hypocrites [...] and tonsured serfs who have fled from their masters',[389] and who were operating in open defiance of episcopal condemnation. Boniface's account of their style of preaching, recounted by Zacharias in his reply, is worth quoting in full:

> They gather about them a like-minded following and carry on their false ministry, not in a catholic church, but in the open country in the huts of farm laborers, where their ignorance and stupid folly can be hidden from the bishops. They neither preach the catholic faith to pagans, nor have they themselves the true faith. They do not even know the sacred words which any catechumen old enough to use his reason can learn and understand, not do they expect them to be uttered by those whom they are to baptize, as, for instance, the renunciation of Satan, and so forth. Neither do they fortify them with the sign of the cross, which should precede baptism, nor do they teach them belief in one God and the Holy Trinity; nor do they require them to believe with the heart for righteousness or to make confession with the lips for salvation.[390]

Zacharias did not specify where Boniface claimed to have found these preachers, but they appear to have been active in more than one episcopal diocese, for he stated that they were protected by their followers from 'the bishops'. Which bishops Boniface was referring to is unclear. A year or so before writing the letter he appears to have incorporated the bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt into his newly acquired see of Mainz,[391] but he could have been referring to them retrospectively. The fact that neither Boniface nor the popes refer to this specific problem in any letters prior to 748 suggests that it had only recently arisen, or had suddenly become much more serious.

---

[389] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 122; '[F]alsos gyrobagos, adulteros, homicidas, molles, masculorum concubitores, sacrilegos, ypochritas et multos servos tonsuratos, qui fugerunt dominis suis': Tangl, ep. 80, p. 175, ll. 17–20. Zacharias's reply is dated to 1 May 748.

[390] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, pp. 122–23; '[S]eorsum populum consentaneum congregant et illum erroneum minysterium non in aecclesia catholica, sed per agrestia loca, per cellas rusticorum, ubi eorum imperita stultitia celari episcopis possit, perpetrant nec fidem catholicam paganis predicant nec ipsi fidem rectam habent, sed nec ipsa sollempnia verba, quae unusquisque caticuminus, si talis aetatis est, ut iam intellectum habeat, sensu cordis sui percipere et intellegere, nec docent nec quaerent ab eis, quos baptizare debent, id est abrenuntiatione satane et cetera, sed neque signacula crucis Christi eos muniunt, quae precedere debent baptismum, sed nec aliquam credulitatem unius deitatis et sanctae trinitatis docent, neque ab eis quaerent, ut corde credant ad iustitiam et oris confessio fiat illis in salutem': Tangl, ep. 80, p. 175, l. 23, to p. 176, l. 5.

[391] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 229–34.

If we examine the wider context of central Germania around this time, the major contemporary events recorded in the annals are the Frankish invasions of Saxony in 744 and 748, both of which involved mass baptisms as a term of Saxon capitulation.[392] As discussed in Chapter 5, the fact that Bishop Hildegar of Cologne was killed during Pippin's campaign of 753[393] implies that the mass baptisms associated with the Frankish invasions of Saxony during the 740s and 750s did not involve Boniface.[394] The reference to *pagani* in Zacharias's above-quoted account and the implication that the lay following of the pseudo-priests was ignorant of such basic Christian doctrines as the Holy Trinity further indicates that they are probably not to be located in the relatively Christianized Frankish territories.[395]

The passage also immediately follows a query in the letter concerning people who had been baptized some years previously by priests, now dead, who had been guilty of performing animal sacrifices to pagan gods.[396] The deceased priests referred to may well have been those whom Boniface had accused of doing exactly the same in a letter to Gregory III sixteen years earlier.[397] If so, the Thunaer-worshipping priests had apparently been expelled by Boniface from his territory in 732, only to relocate farther north, where Boniface, after expanding his mission into the borderlands two decades later, re-encountered their handiwork. He informed Zacharias in 747/48 that he had already re-baptized the communities involved,[398] precisely the course that Gregory III had instructed him to take in 732.[399]

---

[392] For the invasion of 744, see *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 27, p. 180, ll. 25–28; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 4–5; *Ann. Petav.*, p. 11. For 748, *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 181, ll. 14–22; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 7–8; *Ann. Fuld.*, p. 346, ll. 11–15. For a discussion of dating, see Chapter 5, above, pp. 211–16.

[393] *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 182, ll. 19–27; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 10–11.

[394] See Chapter 5, above, pp. 211–16.

[395] Boniface himself made a distinction between true, unbaptized pagans and erring Christians, as we see in his letter to Archbishop Egbert of York, where he described how he had been sent 'to preach to the erring and the pagan peoples of Germania' (ad predicandum Germaniae erroneis vel paganis gentibus): Tangl, ep. 75, p. 157, ll. 16–17. Compare his account of the heretic Aldebert's following in Francia, which was composed of 'a multitude of country dwellers' (multitudo rusticorum), but not 'pagans': Tangl, ep. 59, p. 111, l. 23.

[396] Tangl, ep. 80, p. 174, l. 26, to p. 175, l. 12.

[397] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 5–7.

[398] Tangl, ep. 80, p. 174, l. 26, to p. 175, l. 3.

[399] Tangl, ep. 28, p. 51, ll. 5–7.

It seems possible, therefore, that some of the preachers condemned by Boniface in 747/48 were connected to the expansion of his mission into Saxony from 738/39 onwards, and especially to the Frankish campaigns of the 740s. Those eastern Saxons who received baptism in 744 and 748 had only done so following their defeat; the Saxons north of Hessia were similarly obliged to accept Frankish preachers as a term of surrender in 753.[400] As Staab has observed, Frankish bishops of this time such as Hildegar of Cologne, unlike Boniface, may have viewed it as their Christian duty to personally take up arms and forcibly convert those pagan Saxons who had attacked their dioceses.[401] They did not, however, share Boniface's concern for Roman orthodoxy, orthopraxy and the establishment of stable parishes within a coherent episcopal framework. This may have led to a flood of poorly regulated, self-styled preachers into the newly subjugated Saxon borderlands who operated under a degree of Frankish protection, but neither respected the authority of Boniface, who had always intended to Christianize the region himself, nor troubled themselves with organising a stable parochial system.

Boniface's description to the Pope of the pseudo-priests, though based on an element of truth, was probably exaggerated somewhat for dramatic effect. The failure of the Frankish rulers to make good their promise of 744 and grant Boniface his much-desired metropolitan seat at Cologne was fresh in his memory in 747/48,[402] and he was still petitioning for it unsuccessfully in 751.[403] But he was by this stage an old man, his eyesight failing,[404] and his great plans for a unified archdiocese of Germania were foundering on the rocks of Frankish politics. Without Cologne he did not control the crucial territory east of the Rhine between Hessia and Frisia. Even worse, the Frankish ruler had begun to use baptism as a tool of political coercion in Saxony without any concern for the long-

---

[400] *Fred. Cont.*, chap. 31, p. 182, ll. 19–27; *Ann. reg. Franc.*, pp. 10–11. On dating to 753, not 752 as some minor annals claim, see Böhmer and Mühlbacher, *Regesta Imperii*, p. 35.

[401] Staab, 'Rudi populo rudis adhuc praesul', pp. 252, 264.

[402] In 745 Zacharias confirmed Boniface's authority over the see of Cologne (Tangl, ep. 60, p. 124, ll. 23–27), although the Frankish rulers failed to transfer the seat to him (Tangl, ep. 80, p. 179, l. 27, to p. 180, l. 1; ep. 87, p. 195, l. 26, to p. 196, l. 2): this failure ultimately led to the dispute in 753 between Boniface and Bishop Hildegar of Cologne over the control of Utrecht and the mission territories of Frisia (Tangl, ep. 109, pp. 234–36). See also Boniface's 747 letter to Cuthbert of Canterbury, in which he lamented the fact that he did not, as archbishops were supposed to by canon law, have full control over his own province (Tangl, ep. 78, p. 164, l. 21, to p. 165, l. 1).

[403] Tangl, ep. 86, p. 193, ll. 14–20.

[404] Boniface refers to his failing eyesight in his 742x46 letter to Daniel of Winchester: Tangl, ep. 63, p. 131, ll. 4–16.

term consequences of failing to consolidate newly converted areas with organized missions or church structures.

In a letter to his old friend and confidante Daniel of Winchester written around this time (between 742 and the death of Daniel in 746), Boniface resorted to the parable of the cockle of the field to represent his plight:

> They strive to cover and choke with weeds or to turn into poisonous grain the seed of the Word which we have received from the bosom of the Catholic and Apostolic Church and have tried to sow. What we plant they do not water that it may increase but try to uproot that it may wither away, offering to the people and teaching them new diversions and errors of diverse sorts. Some abstain from foods which God has made for our use; some nourish themselves only with milk and honey, rejecting all other foods; some declare — and this is most harmful to the people — that murderers or adulterers who persist in their crimes may nevertheless be priests of God. But the people, as the Apostle says, will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers.[405]

Boniface's reference in this passage to people who believed that 'murderers and adulterers' could hold priestly office was echoed in Zacharias's 748 reply to his report of the pseudo-priests active in his territory, and suggests that the two letters are describing similar or identical situations.[406] If these are references to the same group of corrupt Frankish preachers, Boniface's letter to Daniel reinforces the impression that they were active in recently converted territory. In the previous chapter we examined the use of harvest as a metaphor for missionary preaching in the letters of Boniface,[407] and here Boniface employed it to describe districts where he had 'attempted to sow the seed of the Word',[408] only to have his crop

---

[405] *The Letters of Saint Boniface*, trans. by Emerton, p. 93; 'Et semen verbi, quod de sinu catholicê et apostolicê êcclesiae sumptum et nobis commendatum seminare aliquantulum studemus, illi cum lolio superseminare et suffocare nituntur vel in herbam pestiferi generis convertere. Et quod plantamus non inrigant ut crescat, sed evellare student ut marcescat, offerentes populis et docentes novas sectas et diversi generis errores. Quidam "abstinentes a cibus, quos Deus ad percipiendum creavit" (I Timothy 4. 3); quidam melle et lactê proprie pascentes se panem et ceteros abiciunt cibos; quidam autem adfirmant, quod plurimum populo nocet, homicidas vel adulteros in ipsis sceleribus perseverantes fieri tamen posse Dei sacerdotes. Populi autem iuxta dictum apostoli "sanam doctrinam non sustinebunt, sed coacervabunt sibi magistros secundum sua desideria" (II Timothy 4. 3) et reliqua': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 129, ll. 15–28. On the heretics Aldebert and Clemens, see Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen'.

[406] From Gregory's reply, it appears that Boniface's chief concern was whether baptisms performed by morally compromised priests who nonetheless used the correct invocation of the Trinity remained valid (Tangl, ep. 80, p. 174, ll. 4–14).

[407] See Chapter 6, above, pp. 251–53.

[408] '[S]emen verbi [...] seminare aliquantulum studemus': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 129, ll. 15–17.

poisoned, suffocated, or left to wither by corrupt pseudo-priests. That some of these preachers were closely connected to the highest echelons of the Frankish elite is clear from Boniface's assertion that he could not avoid contact with them when he attended court.[409]

Neither Zacharias nor Daniel could offer Boniface any real advice. Zacharias instructed Boniface to condemn the false preachers in a synod, strip them of their office and place them under permanent monastic penance. Yet he also seemed aware of the limitations of Boniface's authority, for he reassured him that if those measures failed he could, at least, take comfort from having tried to maintain canon law.[410] Daniel, meanwhile, could only advise Boniface to endure with patience what he could not change.[411] The mission in Hessia may have achieved rapid success in the 720s, but this was clearly not replicated when Boniface attempted to expand his mission north. Despite initial gains in the wake of Charles Martel's campaign of 738, the successful conversion of the Saxons could only take place through a tightly co-ordinated mission east of the Rhine, and for that Boniface needed Cologne. Without it, lines of communication were strained, access by unorthodox preachers could not be checked, and the fabric of the mission disintegrated.

Boniface's failure in this regard, as well as the continued turbulence of the Frankish frontier with the Saxons, meant that he struggled to assert any control over potential missionary territory north of Schützeberg. He had problems closer to home, too. There was always the danger that his own missionaries, left too long without close supervision, would, in the modern terminology, 'go native'. Torchtwine, Berehthere, Eanbercht, and Hunraed, the four mysterious Anglo-Saxon 'fornicators and adulterers' whom Boniface expelled from Thuringia in 723,[412] may have been the remnants of Willibrord's brief mission in the province, left alone for too long in a distant, politically unstable land. 'Fornication' and 'adultery', for Boniface and his biographer, could mean nothing more than that the priests had married local women. While such a move, which would have tied them into local networks of kinship and protection, may have been necessary for

---

[409] 'Nos quidem patrocinatus auxilium in palatio Francorum quaerentes a talium corporali communione abstinere et segregare nos iuxta precepta canonum non possumus': Tangl, ep. 63, p. 139, ll. 29–31.

[410] '[S]i vero non fuerint conversi, tua predicantis non periet iustitia. Habebis enim solaciantem te contra nequitiam malignantium sanctorum apostolorum et ceterorum probabilium patrum canonicam sanctionem': Tangl, ep. 80, p. 176, ll. 11–15.

[411] Tangl, ep. 64, p. 134, l. 11, to p. 135, l. 25.

[412] *Vita Bonifatii*, chap. 6, p. 33, ll. 7–12.

their survival, Boniface was not the type to regard such lapses charitably. The canonical punishment was a hard flogging followed by two years in prison on bread and water.[413] Another priest who succumbed to the same vice some years later underwent the ordained punishment and penance, and was reinstalled by the Franks in a new parish within Boniface's territory. Boniface tolerated his continued presence only because of the desperate lack of experienced preachers.[414]

Yet the most egregious example of errant behaviour by missionaries occurred early in Lul's episcopate. An Anglo-Saxon priest named Willefrith had, shortly before Boniface's death, invited his friend and fellow priest Enraed to join him in the district south of Fulda without seeking approval from his bishop. The general disruption caused by the martyrdom of Boniface and several senior members of the mission in 754 evidently gave the pair some breathing space, until Lul, newly installed in the see of Mainz, decided to make their case a test of both his personal authority and the efficacy of newly promulgated canon law.[415] Enraed, however, who had sinned by disregarding Boniface's and Lul's episcopal jurisdiction, simply refused to undergo the requisite penance. Lul, in response, excommunicated him. Enraed fled to Willefrith, who offered him shelter against his own bishop.

This was a serious enough affront to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but worse was to come. Willefrith and Enraed, perhaps sensing that their time in Germania was running out, decided to profit as much as possible from the churches they controlled. They began to systematically dispose of church goods with an efficiency that would be admirable were the human cost of their actions not so evident. Six church dependents suddenly found themselves abducted in the dead of night and sold into the service of new masters. Ninety-four pigs, fifteen cows, seven fine bulls, and a number of horses were driven to Hammelburg and sold at market. Enraed stole vestments, weapons, horses and a fortune of gold and silver which the faithful had donated to the church. Most chilling of all was the calculating way in which they separated another three-generation family of dependents. Enraed took the grandson home to England and gave him to his mother as a slave. The remainder of the family — Faegenolf, his two sons Raegenolf and Amanolf, Amanolf's wife Leobthrute and his daughter Amalthruthae — Willefrith sold to a Saxon slave trader named Huelp in return for a single horse.

[413] Tangl, ep. 56, p. 101, ll. 1–7.

[414] Tangl, ep. 91, p. 207, l. 26, to p. 208, l. 24.

[415] Lul cited chapter eight of the Synod of Verneiul, held in 755, when he wrote concerning the matter to Chrodegang of Metz (Tangl, ep. 110, p. 237, ll. 10–15).

Sadly we do not know how the scandal ended, but this remarkable episode, recounted in an exasperated letter of Lul to Archbishop Chrodegang of Metz,[416] illustrates the central problem of retaining control of large numbers of priests who were necessarily scattered across a wide territory. Willefrith and Enraed were based in the Grabfeld, the relatively Christianized, wealthy region between Fulda and Würzburg, but similar problems could arise wherever episcopal authority failed to make itself feared and respected. Lul, bookish and pretentious, was no Boniface. For all his evident skill as an administrator, his place was in the bishop's cathedral, not out in the mission field, roving the valleys from place to place as Boniface had done, greeting and inspiring his followers to exert themselves for the sake of Christ and the church. The importance of Boniface's personal charisma to the success of his mission should not be underestimated.

The limits of the mission in Hessia became fossilized in the boundaries of the archdiaconate of Fritzlar, thought to be largely coterminous with the short-lived bishopric of Büraburg.[417] The hilltop chapels of St Peter proposed above would have marked the extremities of the Hessian mission field, overlooking the valleys which had been won for Christ after 738 and again lost to paganism a few short years later. The Petersberg near Volkmarsen is less than 10 kilometres from the Saxon fortress of Gaulskopf, where one Bonifatian chapel may have been burned to the ground in the Saxon uprising of 752. The minster of Schützeberg, whose priests would have been responsible for the densely settled Habichtswald district, was a mere half day's walk farther south (see Fig. 40). Maintaining the security and upkeep of such frontier churches, perhaps with a view to one day reclaiming lost territory, must have been one of the more challenging aspects of the later mission. In this context we can return to the letter of Boniface to Abbot Fulrad of St Denis, one of his closest Frankish allies, written either shortly before or after the disaster of 752:

> It seems to us that on account of my infirmities I must soon end this mortal life and the daily course of my activities. Wherefore I pray His Royal Highness [King Pippin] in the name of Christ, the Son of God, to indicate to me while I am still living what provision he may be willing to make thereafter in regard to my disciples. They are nearly all foreigners. Some are priests living in many places in the service of the Church and of the people. Some are monks in our cloisters or are children learning to read. Others are mature men who have long been living with me and helping in my work. I am anxious

---

[416] Tangl, ep. 110, pp. 236–38.
[417] Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, pp. 6–7.

about all of these, that after my death they may not face dispersion but may have the support and patronage of Your Highness and not be scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd—also that those peoples which are near the pagan border may not lose the law of Christ. […] I make this request especially because my priests living near the border of the heathen lead a very meagre existence. They can get enough to eat but cannot procure clothing without help and protection from elsewhere, as I have assisted them to maintain themselves in those regions for the service of the people.[418]

One can hardly envy those priests referred to by Boniface in this letter. The shields of the Frankish garrisons at Kesterburg, Büraburg, and Weidelsburg protected them for now, but they were far removed from the comfort and wealth enjoyed by Willefrith and Enraed in the Grabfeld. These were the toughest, most zealous, most reliable of the missionaries who came to aid Boniface, the few who could cope with the isolation and impoverishment of the borderlands. Not for another twenty years would the Diemel valley fall finally and violently under Frankish control, and Charlemagne realize Boniface's vision of a Christianized Saxony. Boniface's disciples did not forget this vision, or fail to devote themselves to it even after their master's death. For the priest Wigberht, one of Lul's envoys to the Anglo-Saxon church, rumours of a renewed Saxon mission were enough to stir him from a promised life of domestic comfort with his family in Wessex:

> On another matter, if a door of divine mercy should be opened to the region of our people—that is, among the Saxons—be sure to inform us of it. There are many who would like to hurry this door with their help, with the assistance of God.[419]

---

[418] 'Videtur, ut vitam istam temporalem et cursum dierum meorum per istas infirmitates cito debeam finire. Propterea deprecor celsitudinem regis nostri pro nomine Christi filii Dei, ut mihi nunc viventi indicare et mandare dignetur circa discipulos meos, qualem mercedem postea de illis facere voluerit. Sunt enim pene omnes peregrini. Quidam presbiteri per multa loca ad ministerium êcclesiae et populum constituti; quidam sunt monachi per cellulas nostras et infantes ad legentes litteras ordinati; sunt et aliqui seniores, qui longo tempore mecum viventes laboraverunt et me adiuvabant. De his omnibus sollicitus sum, ut post obitum meum non disperdantur, set ut habeant mercedis vestrae consilium et patrocinium celsitudinis vestrae et non sint dispersi sicut oves non habentes pastorem et populi prope marcam paganorum non perdant legem Christi. […] Propterea hoc maxime autem fieri peto, quia presbiteri mei prope marcam paganorum pauper-culam vitam habeant. Panem ad manducandum adquirere possunt, set vestimenta invenire ibi non possunt, nisi aliunde consilium et audiutorem habeant, ut sustinere et indurare in illis locis ad ministerium populi possint, eodem modo sicut ego illos adiuvavi': Tangl, ep. 93, p. 213, l. 6, to p. 214, l. 2.

[419] 'De cetero autem si in regione gentis nostrae, id est Saxanorum, aliqua ianua divinae misericordiae aperta sit, remandare nobis id ipsum curate. Quam multi cum Dei adiutorio in eorum auxilium festinare cupiunt': Tangl, ep. 137, p. 276, ll. 25–27.

This letter was probably written in reference to Charlemagne's campaign of 772, which began with the capture of Eresburg on the Diemel — the strategic hinge of the 'door of divine mercy' into Saxony. Sturm, the ageing abbot of Fulda who had begun his priestly career among the forests and valleys of Hessia, was summoned to Eresburg by Charlemagne and given jurisdiction over the new mission field.[420] He was undoubtedly joined by other disciples of Boniface, although those who had been young priests in 738 would have been in their sixties now, and many more must have died in the intervening years. If the strain of this new mission proved too much for Sturm, who returned from Eresburg to Fulda only to end his life, then he died in loyal pursuit of his master's ultimate ambition.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have considered Boniface's Hessian mission in its full context. It seems that the Fritzlar basin, which had been a focus of settlement since prehistoric times, was the centre of a rich sacred landscape whose shrines were not restricted to the Oak of Jupiter at Geismar. Through the 720s and 730s Boniface pursued a policy of systematically confronting and supplanting these pagan sites throughout Hessia, and devised a stable network of mother churches surrounding his early churches at Fritzlar and Büraburg. He established a firm base of material support among the local elite at the same time as he negotiated the intricacies of Frankish court politics.

After almost two decades of work in Hessia and Thuringia, Boniface was given the chance of extending his mission beyond the borderlands into Saxony proper, and he seized it. Yet despite his early success in converting large numbers of Saxons under the close protection of Charles Martel and his establishment of bishoprics at Büraburg, Erfurt, and Würzburg in 741, the rest of the decade was to bring a series of disappointments and failures. Cologne narrowly escaped his grasp, for reasons that have not been preserved in our sources; his vision of a unified archdiocese of Germania never came to pass; the bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt proved untenable; his attempts to reform hostile elements in the Frankish church were consistently opposed; and he was unable to consolidate whatever gains he had made in Saxony.

Nonetheless, the thirty-three years of Boniface's mission in Hessia left an enduring and detectable impression on the toponymic and ecclesiastical land-

---

[420] *Vita Sturmi*, chap. 24, p. 377.

scapes of the region. It was a decisive period in Hessian history and in European history in general. From the moment Boniface entered Hessia in 721, to the moment he left it for the last time in 754, he had dominated its ecclesiastical development and transformed its culture. It was the only region of Boniface's mission, from Bavaria, Thuringia, and the middle Rhine to Frisia, that had not already seen a significant degree of Christian influence, and where there were no powerful Frankish interests to obstruct him. Hessia thus gave him the opportunity to prove his immense talents as an organizer, leader, and missionary, and in this chapter we have seen something of what he was able to achieve.

# Conclusion

I opened this book with a half-imagined account of the felling of the Oak of Jupiter at Geismar in 723, and that historical event has remained at the centre of the study. It symbolizes the accomplishment for which Boniface is most famed and remembered, and dramatizes the conflict of culture and meaning that is inherent in any missionary enterprise. We can, to an extent, recover some of the worlds of meaning of the Anglo-Saxon missionary community, if not of the pagans they sought to convert. When Boniface stepped out of the church of St Brigid and looked across the Eder in 721, he would have seen not merely an array of hills and forests, but a land ensnared in spiritual darkness. The peak of Gudensberg rose in the Fritzlar basin to the north-east, dominating the view, unavoidable to the eye, a daily reminder of the rites and sacrifices performed at the ritual centre of Maden. The ramparts and slopes of Büraburg are smothered in forest now, but in Boniface's time they would have been stripped bare for fuel and fodder, giving a clear view across the Eder to the village of Geismar and the nearby Oak of Jupiter. The missionaries, standing on the ramparts with their faces cooled by a northerly breeze, may even have been able to hear the distant sounds of whatever rituals were performed in that grove.

And this was only the beginning. Hessia, as it stretched away to the border-lands with the Saxons, bristled with hilltops, groves, and springs dedicated to pagan gods and spirits. The people frequented them because they always had done. Their myths and memories were woven into the hills, streams, and forests of Hessia; their ancestors had walked the same paths and offered sacrifices to the same gods. Such places defined identity and community through the delineation of space and time. The Franks had arrived, founded their fortresses, built their churches, and made themselves the rulers of Hessia. Yet they were few in number, and after a generation the Oak of Jupiter still stood, undaunted by the Frankish

soldiers who tramped by on their way to the Kesterburg or to the borderlands. Things had always been this way, and always would be.

Boniface and his companions saw things differently, and through this book we have explored the ensuing thirty-three years of the Christian conversion of Hessia. In Chapter 3 it was argued that the West Saxon church, in which Boniface spent the first half of his life, provided the foundations upon which his later approach to mission was built. The deepest of these foundations were close relations between church and ruling secular power, absolute subservience to Rome, and strong episcopal government down to the parochial level. These were to become the guiding principles of the mission in Hessia.

In Chapter 4 we examined the political context of Hessia prior to Boniface's arrival and found that Hessia was a region of fundamental strategic importance to the Franks. Not only had Frankish interests been gradually developing there since the mid-seventh century at least, but by *c.* 700 the Frankish rulers had made an immense investment of resources and manpower in securing it against Saxon aggression, manifested most clearly in the hillforts of Büraburg, Kesterburg, and Weidelsburg. However, this was primarily a political and military, not religious, expansion: the Franks had brought Christianity to Hessia, but neither they nor the Irish monks who may have accompanied them attempted to promote it in any systematic fashion among the native population. The Bishop of Mainz's authority did not stretch beyond the Wetterau, and the Archbishop of Trier's faded in the upper Lahn valley. The arrival of Boniface in Hessia in 721 pre-empted whatever interests they may have hoped to develop there, but they were powerless to remove him.

In Chapter 5 we established the chronological framework of the Hessian mission, a task which was essential for a more nuanced interpretation of the sources in general. A central argument of the chapter was that Boniface saw his mission in Hessia as a preliminary stage in a broader strategy which he intended to encompass the conversion of the Saxons. One consequence of his powerful desire to achieve this goal was the development of a complex and largely antagonistic relationship between himself and certain powerful members of the Frankish Rhineland church, and in this sense Boniface's missionary activities and his reforming activities were fundamentally interconnected. Boniface recognized that a successful mission in Saxony required the stabilization of the Rhineland churches under an episcopacy which was united with its secular protectors by a shared devotion to Rome. His attempted reforms of the Frankish church, though in part successful, were largely thwarted during his lifetime by hostility and indifference among the Frankish elites; they were at any rate insufficient to allow

him to reinvigorate his tattered mission to the Saxons, which remained embattled at the time of his death in 754.

The aim of Chapters 6 and 7 was to bring us closer to what one might term the 'missionary experience' through an exploration of the self-definition of the missionary community in its literary discourse and the ways in which Boniface and his followers attempted to achieve their goal of converting the pagans of Germania. We saw that the Anglo-Saxon missionary community perceived and represented its own identity and role in terms that were entirely foreign to the indigenous culture of Hessia, that drew from centuries of biblical, patristic, and even classical tradition. They shared a divine mandate to spread the Word, and embraced the perils of *peregrinatio* both to pursue this mission and to bring themselves closer to Christ. Their zealotry both created and overcame obstacles: Boniface's reluctance to compromise the purity of Roman teachings and rituals, his need for precision and his disdain for the lax standards of the Frankish Rhineland church, inevitably placed limitations on his mission. Had he been more prepared to work with Milo *et eiusmodi similes*, even at the risk of being morally tainted, perhaps the Frankish bishops in turn would have contributed much-needed manpower and resources to the conversion of the borderlands. Yet this was unthinkable to Boniface at the time, and is purely hypothetical now.

Paradoxically, the cohesion of the Anglo-Saxon missionary community under Boniface, while it could lead to conflicts with those who lay outside it, also helped the community endure those conflicts. Over the years, a constant literary discourse projected a representation of the mission towards an Anglo-Saxon audience which was fundamental to the self-identity of the missionaries. Decades passed, but the letters show that Boniface never ceased to portray himself as an exile, and his friends back home never ceased to regard him as such. The symbolic figure of the *exul Germanicus*, he who was pledged to carry the torch of the Gospel into the dark forests of the pagans, to free the captives of Satan, and bring them into the knowledge of freedom of Christ, was immensely powerful. A central feature of the persona was suffering. Hardships, obstacles, and dangers were an integral part of exile and serving Christ. They could not be avoided; indeed, they were to be dramatized, emphasized, integrated into the daily experience of moving and preaching in the hazardous borderlands of the Diemel, where waves of Frankish and Saxon ambition clashed and receded like competing tides. Boniface chose to send his missionaries into this maelstrom, and many were prepared to go.

The confrontation at Geismar was thus merely the opening movement of a much larger score. Through the eradication of pagan shrines the missionaries were attempting to rip out the paganism of Hessia by its thickest and most obvious

roots. Yet far more intricate fibres of cultural identity than these were threaded through the individual villages and farmsteads of the landscape, customs such as the bonfires and doll-making that were condemned in the *Indiculus superstitionum*.[1] An understaffed and under-resourced mission could not possibly pluck out these fibres one by one to the extent Boniface desired, even with the foundation of a stable parochial system and the universal application of the rite of episcopal confirmation. The result was a continuation of pre-Christian behaviour and belief within a nominally Christian framework: not quite the version of Christianity promulgated by Boniface and his missionaries, but a version adapted, elaborated, and interpreted according to the immediate needs of recently baptized communities who may not have seen preachers, at least not Bonifatian preachers, for weeks at a time.

There are many themes in this book that could be developed, particularly concerning the interaction between preacher and local community, but our sources have their limitations. For instance, it is difficult to ascertain from the surviving letters just how the missionaries dealt with the failure of orthodoxy and orthopraxy to permeate every aspect of social life. In the 740s, at least, Boniface was quick to blame the failure of his Christianization of certain areas on the interference of corrupt and non-canonical preachers who operated without episcopal direction and to some extent with Frankish protection.[2] Yet in central Hessia, where he enjoyed widespread support among the local elites, Boniface appears to have established a close-knit network of mother churches that may have given him a virtual monopoly of preaching activity in the area. Did he encounter similar obstacles in Christianizing the heart of his mission field as he did at its fringes, and, if so, how did he perceive and account for this? Did he blame unworthy preachers, insufficient instruction, or the stubborn refusal of the common people to correct their behaviour? How far was he prepared to compromise his own sense of orthodoxy and orthopraxy before he laid his hands on the brow of a candidate for confirmation? A careful retrospective study of the nature and imposition of lay penance during the Carolingian period may help elucidate this aspect of the mission, and would usefully develop some of the findings of this book.[3]

---

[1] Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum*.

[2] See especially Tangl, ep. 63, p. 129; ep. 80, pp. 175–76.

[3] Rob Meens, following his analysis of early medieval penitential texts, argues that 'penitentials were generally intended to be employed in a pastoral context [and] were composed for parish priests to be consulted in the normal course of their pastoral duties' ('The Frequency and Nature

Finally, the interdisciplinary and contextual study of Boniface's mission could be expanded to encompass the remainder of his territory. My study on which this book is based originally encompassed both Hessia and Thuringia, but the wealth of material pertaining to Hessia alone led to an unavoidable narrowing of focus. There is no reason why a study such as this one could not be pursued in Thuringia, Bavaria, or the Grabfeld. Such projects would offer valuable contrasts and parallels to Boniface's work in Hessia, and perhaps show how he adapted his approach according to the circumstances of each particular region: the depth and nature of Christianity already established, for instance, or the political relationship of local elites to their Frankish overlords. Nor is there any reason to limit this methodological approach to Boniface's eighth-century mission field, when huge tracts of late antique and early medieval Europe saw cultural transformations of equal profundity.

Boniface remains one of the most intensely studied figures of the early Middle Ages. The abundant historical sources pertaining to his mission continue to inspire innovative and valuable publications which deepen our understanding of the missionary community,[4] his mission theology,[5] his posthumous cult and veneration,[6] his insular background,[7] and much more besides. With this book I have tried to demonstrate that a broadly interdisciplinary, landscape-focused regional study can provide a fresh and important perspective on Boniface and his achievements, and I thereby hope to have contributed something of use not only to Bonifatian studies, but to studies of conversion-period Europe in general.

---

of Early Medieval Penance', pp. 46–47). The manner in which confession and penance may have integrated into the parochial care of a recently converted region deserves further study.

[4] Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius*.

[5] Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*.

[6] Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben*.

[7] Yorke, 'The Insular Background to Boniface's Continental Career'.

# Terms and Expressions
## Relating to Mission and Missionaries
### in the Letters of Boniface and Lul

## 1. Terms and Expressions Relating to Missions and Missionaries

(The words in italics are used in the analyses in section 2, below.)

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Gregory II | Boniface | ad *dispensationem* verbi Dei | 17, 10 |
| | | | te con*ministro* utamur | 17, 11 |
| | | | in *laborem* salutiferae *praedicationis* | 17, 15 |
| 14 | Eangyth | Boniface | in [...] *peregrinationem* illam | 26, 13–14 |
| | | | incoluit illam *peregrinationem* | 26, 18–19 |
| 17 | Gregory II | all faithful | ad *predicandum* recte fidei | 30, 13–14 |
| | | | *predicando* verbum salutis | 30, 16 |
| | | | *opus* [...] pietatis et *negotium* salutis | 30, 28–29 |
| | | | *labori* | 31, 7 |
| | | | *laborem* | 31, 8–9 |
| 20 | Gregory II | C. Martel | ad *predicandum* | 34, 9 |
| | | | in sorte *predicationis* procedit | 34, 20–21 |
| 21 | Gregory II | Old Saxons | fidelis *minister* | 36, 21–22 |
| 23 | Daniel | Boniface | evangelice *predicationis* | 38, 20 |
| | | | cotidiani *labore* | 38, 21 |
| | | | *operi* | 39, 1 |
| | | | *predicationis opus* | 39, 3 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Gregory II | Boniface | ad *inluminationem* | 42, 4–5 |
| | | | *ministerium* verbi | 42, 8–9 |
| | | | *praedicationis* praeconio | 42, 9 |
| | | | *praedicationis* verbum | 42, 26 |
| 25 | Gregory II | Thuringians | *docete* omnes gentes (Matt 28. 19) | 43, 15–17 |
| 26 | Gregory II | Boniface | *ministerio* | 44, 16–17 |
| | | | *operis* | 47, 20 |
| 28 | Gregory III | Boniface | ad *inluminationem* | 49, 14 |
| | | | *negotium* salutis | 51, 28 |
| 32 | Boniface | Pehthelm | nobis *opus* est periclitantibus | 55, 21 |
| 33 | Boniface | Nothelm | *peregrinationis* meae | 57, 7 |
| | | | Augustini pontificis ac *praedicatoris* primi Anglorum | 57, 11–12 |
| | | | *praedicatores* | 58, 12 |
| 35 | Boniface | Eadburg | hoc *iter* | 60, 18 |
| 38 | Boniface | Aldhere | *peregrinationis* nostrae | 63, 12 |
| | | | nobiscum *laborabant* in Domino | 63, 28 |
| 41 | Boniface | Fritzlar monks | pontifex [...] de *legatione* nostra laeta responsa reddidit et consilium et preceptum dedit [...] in certo *labore* persistamus | 66, 11–14 |
| 42 | Gregory III | all religious | *predicare* verbum Dei | 67, 14 |
| | | | *ministerio exhortationis* sanctae catholice fidei | 67, 25–26 |
| 43 | Gregory III | Hess. and Thuringians | ad *faciendam* Deo *plebem perfectam* | 68, 16–17 |
| 47 | Torthelm | Boniface | in his *operibus* | 76, 10 |
| 49 | Lul | Cuniburg | ipsiusque *laboris* | 79, 1–2 |
| 50 | Boniface | Zacharias | in ista *legatione* | 81, 12 |
| 51 | Zacharias | Boniface | per tuam *predicationem* | 86, 22 |
| | | | *ministrum* Dei et *dispensatorem* ecclesiarum Christi | 92, 7–8 |
| 54 | Gemmulus | Boniface | in *opere*, quo adsumptus es | 97, 16–17 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 57 | Zacharias | Boniface | *opere* ad *inluminationem* gentium | 103, 9–10 |
| | | | *ministerio* Christi | 105, 12 |
| 60 | Zacharias | Boniface | in bono *opere* | 120, 26 |
| | | | in bono *opere* | 121, 13 |
| 61 | Zacharias | Boniface | *opus* bonum | 125, 23 |
| | | | ad *predicandum* | 126, 1 |
| 63 | Boniface | Daniel | cursum *ministerii* nostri | 130, 9–10 |
| | | | pius *laborantium* consolator Deus | 130, 13 |
| | | | *predicatione* | 130, 29 |
| | | | solacio *peregrinationis* meae | 131, 5 |
| 64 | Daniel | Boniface | *ritus* religionis vestrae | 132, 24–25 |
| | | | *operam* | 132, 29 |
| 65 | Boniface | Eadburg | conversatio *peregrinationis* nostrae | 137, 12 |
| 67 | Boniface | Leobgytha and others | ad *predicandum* evangelium | 140, 2 |
| 75 | Boniface | Egbert | *predicatorem* ad *predicandum* | 157, 16 |
| 76 | Boniface | Huetbert | *laborantes* | 159, 4 |
| | | | solacium *peregrinationis* nostrae | 159, 16–17 |
| 77 | Zacharias | Boniface | peragendum [...] *ministerium* | 160, 6–7 |
| 78 | Boniface | Cuthbert | *labor* nostri *ministerii* | 162, 13 |
| 80 | Zacharias | Boniface | *predicatione* evangelii Christi | 172, 21–22 |
| | | | *ministerium* tibi impositum | 173, 5 |
| | | | *predicatores* | 173, 15 |
| | | | *ministerio* Christi | 180, 14–15 |
| 82 | Zacharias | Frankish | in *exhortatione* evangelii in *ministerio* | 183, 19 |
| | | | con*laborandum* [...] in evangelium Christi | 184, 5–6 |
| 85 | Theophy. | Boniface | vestri *laboris* crementum | 190, 13 |
| 86 | Boniface | Zacharias | ad *predicandum* verbum fidei | 192, 17–18 |
| | | | verbum Christi [...] *diximus* | 193, 32 |
| 87 | Zacharias | Boniface | ad *predicandum* verbum evangelii | 194, 20 |
| | | | ad *predicandum* [...] evangelii | 195, 1 |
| 90 | Benedict | Boniface | propter divinum *mandatum* et *predicationem* evangelii | 206, 4–5 |
| | | | decursum *ministerii* tui | 206, 9–10 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91 | Boniface | Egbert | *laborantibus* | 207, 9 |
| 93 | Boniface | Fulrad | *peregrini* | 213, 11 |
| | | | ad *ministerium* | 213, 12 |
| | | | mecum [...] *laboraverunt* | 213, 15 |
| | | | hoc *ministerium* | 213, 23 |
| | | | *predicatorem* | 213, 24 |
| | | | ad *ministerium* | 214, 1 |
| 94 | Boniface | Bugga | amor *peregrinationis* | 214, 14–15 |
| 101 | Wigbert | Glastonbury monks | *labor* noster | 224, 22 |
| | | | *operis* nostri | 224, 24 |
| 104 | Boniface | Gemmulus | *peregrinationis* erumna | 228, 10–11 |
| | | | *peregrinationis* huius consolationem | 228, 14 |
| 105 | Æthelbert | Boniface | *predicationis* vestrae verbo et *labore convertit* | 230, 20–21 |
| | | | per vos cepit *operare* | 230, 22–23 |
| 108 | Boniface | Stephen II | ista *legatione* Romana | 234, 9 |
| 109 | Boniface | Stephen II | ad *predicandum* | 235, 7 |
| | | | *predicans* | 235, 8–9 |
| | | | *predicator* | 235, 30 |
| | | | non *predicavit*, non *convertit* | 235, 30 to |
| | | | ad *predicandum* | 236, 4 |
| | | | *convertit* | 236, 5 |
| | | | *predicatoris* | 236, 6 |
| | | | *predicans* | 236, 8 |
| | | | *predicatoris* | 236, 11 |
| | | | *predicans* | 236, 12 |
| 111 | Cuthbert | Lul | sacraeque *exhortationis* fructum | 239, 11 |
| | | | *peregrinatione* pro amore aeternae patriae | 239, 24 |
| | | | ante eum nullus aliquando *evangelizandi* causa doctor adire temptabat | 240, 11–13 |
| | | | discipulorum Christi *ministerium* | 240, 15 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 112 | Milret | Lul | ille *peregrino* | 244, 6 |
| 121 | Alchred | Lul | te in tam longa *peregrinatione* desudantem | 257, 15–16 |
| 125 | Lul | Koaena | ad consolationem *peregrinationis* nostrae | 263, 9 |
| 126 | Lul | Guthbert | ad consolationem *peregrinationis* | 264, 7–8 |
| 127 | Guthbert | Lul | ad consolationem *tuae peregrinationi* | 265, 2–3 |
| 137 | Wigberht | Lul | multum iam vitae nostrae fluctuando et neglegendo, quasi extra nos fusi, *peregrimus* [for *peregrinamur*] | 276, 19–21 |
| 138 | Wigberht | Lul | ecclesiae et *ministerio* [...] me dimittas | 278, 4 |
| 141 | Lul | anon. | te agente in *peregrinatione* | 281, 7–8 |

## 2. Analysis of Terms According to Correspondents

| Term | No. of occurrences in papal correspondence | No. of occurrences between Anglo-Saxon correspondents | No. of occurrences between other correspondents | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| convertere | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| dicere | 1 | | | 1 |
| dispensatio/ dispensator | 2 | | | 2 |
| docere | 1 | | | 1 |
| exhortatio | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| facere plebem perfectam | 1 | | | 1 |
| inluminatio | 3 | | | 3 |
| iter | | 1 | | 1 |
| labor | 4 | 10 | 2 | 16 |
| legatio | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| mandatum | | | 1 | 1 |
| minister/ ministerium | 11 | 4 | 4 | 19 |
| negotium | 2 | | | 2 |
| opus | 6 | 7 | 1 | 14 |

| Term | No. of occurrences in papal correspondence | No. of occurrences between Anglo-Saxon correspondents | No. of occurrences between other correspondents | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| peregrinatio/ peregrinus/ peregrinari | | 16 | 3 | 19 |
| predicatio/ predicare/ predicator | 24 | 10 | 2 | 36 |
| ritus | | 1 | | 1 |
| **Total:** | 61 | 52 | 13 | 126 |

## 3. The <u>Objects</u> of Boniface's 'Predicatio'

| Tangl ep. # | Expression | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | in laborem salutiferae *predicationis* ad innotescendum <u>gentibus incredulis</u> mysterium fidei | 17, 15–16 |
| 17 | aliquas gentes in Germaniae partibus vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis <u>antiquo hoste suadente errore</u> [...] aliquos vero, qui <u>necdum cognitionem</u> <u>Dei habentes nec baptismatis sacri</u> unda sunt loti [...] necessario pro utrorum inluminationem ad *predicandum* recte fidei verbum harum portitorem Bonifatium [...] ut et illis *predicando* verbum salutis vitam provideat | 30, 7–16 |
| 20 | ad *predicandum* plebibus Germaniae gentis ac diversis in orientali Reni flumini parte consistentibus <u>gentilitatis errore detentis</u> | 34, 9–11 |
| 23 | saxea steriliaque actenus <u>gentilium</u> corda fidei magnitudine fretus fiducialiter adgrediendo vomere evangelice *predicationis* infatigabiliter subigens | 38, 18–21 |
| 24 | *praedicationis* praeconio <u>populum infidelem</u> [...] audivimus converti | 42, 9–10 |
| 51 | cottidie in gremio sanctae matris ecclesiae per tuam *predicationem* <u>novi</u> <u>populi</u> adduntur | 86, 21–22 |
| 75 | catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia [...] indignum ac vilem *predicatorem* ad *predicandum* <u>Germaniae erroneis vel paganis gentibus</u> direxit | 157, 15–17 |
| 86 | Gregorius [...] me indignum ordinavit et ad *predicandum* verbum fidei <u>Germanicis gentibus</u> misit | 192, 17–18 |
| 105 | innumerosam <u>multitudinem gentilium idolatriae vetustissimo errore</u> <u>miserabiliter deceptam</u> ad christiane fidei normam *predicationis* vestrae verbo et labore convertit | 230, 18–21 |

# Metaphors and Motifs
# Used to Represent the Mission
# in the Letters of Boniface and Lul

## 1. Paganism as Captivity, Darkness, and Ignorance

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Gregory II | Boniface | ad gentes quascumque infidelitatis *errore detentas* | 17, 29–30 |
| | | | mentibus *indoctis* | 18, 3 |
| 17 | Gregory II | all faithful | *in umbra mortis* aliquas gentes in Germaniae partibus vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis antiquo hoste suadente *errare* quasi sub religione christiana idolorum culturae eos *servire* cognovimus | 30, 7–10 |
| | | | conparatione *brutorum animalium* pagani factorem *non recognoscunt* | 30, 11–12 |
| | | | si quos [...] astutia diabolica suasos *erroneos* repererit | 30, 17–19 |
| 20 | Gregory II | C. Martel | ad predicandum plebibus Germaniae gentis ac diversis in orientali Reni fluminis parte consistentibus gentilitatis *errore detentis* vel adhuc *insipientibus*, multis adhuc *ignorantiae obscuritatibus prepeditis* | 34, 9–12 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Gregory III | Old Saxons | 'Sapientibus et *insipientibus* debitor sum' | 35, 8 |
| | | | Astutiores enim sunt filii *tenebrarum* quam filii lucis | 35, 27–28 |
| | | | ut a diabolice frauda *liberati* mereamini | 36, 25 |
| 23 | Daniel | Boniface | pagani erubescant pro tam *absurdis* opinionibus | 40, 18–19 |
| | | | in *vanitate* antiqua adhuc perseverant | 41, 1–2 |
| 24 | Gregory II | Boniface | ad *inluminationem* Germaniae gentis *in umbra mortis* sedentis | 42, 4–5 |
| | | | a *tenebris* ad lucem populum illum [...] reducat | 42, 13–14 |
| | | | quantos ab *errore* converteris [...] congnovimus | 42, 22–23 |
| 25 | Gregory II | Thuringians | ab *errore* ad viam salutis | 43, 22 |
| 26 | Gregory II | Boniface | [Deus] in *opacam* silvam lumine veritatis [...] micare praedistinavit | 47, 18–19 |
| 28 | Gregory III | Boniface | ad *inluminationem* gentis Germaniae vel circumquaque *in umbra mortis* morantibus gentibus in *errore* constitutis | 49, 14–16 |
| | | | a gentilitate et *errore* [...] convertisse | 49, 21–22 |
| 30 | Boniface | Eadburg | qui *tenebrosos* angulos Germanicarum gentium lustrare debet | 54, 12–13 |
| 32 | Boniface | Pehthelm | caecis proprias *tenebras ignorantibus* [...] lumen evangelice veritatis offerre nitimur | 55, 25–27 |
| 46 | Boniface | all Anglo-Saxons | [obsecrate ut pagani Saxones] liberemur a *laqueo venantis* satanae | 74, 33 |
| | | | [obsecrate ut pagani Saxones] resipiscant a diabuli *laqueis*, a quibus *capti tenentur* | 75, 4 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 73 | Boniface | Æthelbald | ipsi pagani verum Deum *ignorantes* naturaliter | 150, 6–7 |
| 76 | Boniface | Huetbert | *feras et ignaras* gentes Germaniae | 159, 4 |
| 105 | Æthelbert | Boniface | innumerosam multitudinem gentilium idolatriae vetustissimo *errore* miserabiliter deceptam | 230, 18–20 |
| 111 | Cuthbert | Lul | ferocissimas nationes per devia diutius *errantes* | 240, 4–5 |

## 2. Christianity as Freedom, Light, and Wisdom

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | Gregory II | Boniface | in verbo gratiae Dei, quo *igne salutifero* | 17, 28 |
|  |  |  | consona *ratione* | 18, 3–4 |
| 17 | Gregory II | all faithful | pro utrorum *inluminatione* | 30, 13 |
|  |  |  | ad *inluminatione* gentium | 31, 2–3 |
| 20 | Gregory II | C. Martel | sanctis apostolis [...] ad *lucem* gentium destinatis | 34, 18 |
| 21 | Gregory III | Old Saxons | 'consolentur corda vestra instructa in caritate et in omnes divitias plenitudinis *intellectus*' | 35, 12–13 |
|  |  |  | '[Iesus], in quo sunt omnes thesauri *sapientiae et scientiae* absconditi' | 35, 14–15 |
|  |  |  | Astutiores enim sunt filii tenebrarum quam filii *lucis* | 35, 27–28 |
|  |  |  | '[Deus], qui vult omnes homines *salvos* fieri et ad *agnitionem veritatis* venire' | 36, 14–15 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | Gregory II | Boniface | a tenebris ad *lucem* populum illum [...] reducat | 42, 13–14 |
| 26 | Gregory II | Boniface | [Deus] in opacam silvam *lumine* veritatis [...] *micare* praedestinavit | 47, 18–19 |
| 28 | Gregory III | Boniface | ad *inluminationem* gentis Germaniae | 49, 14–15 |
| 30 | Boniface | Eadburg | qui tenebrosos angulos Germanicarum gentium *lustrare* debet | 54, 13–14 |
| 32 | Boniface | Pehthelm | *lumen* evangelice veritatis offerre nitimur | 55, 25–27 |
| 38 | Boniface | Aldhere | '[Deus] vult omnes homines *salvos* fieri et ad *agnitionem veritatis* venire' | 63, 24–25 |
| | | | ut [Deus gentes Germanicas] ad *agnitionem* creatoris [...] convertat | 63, 26–27 |
| 45 | Gregory III | Boniface | non desinas [...] docendo [...] ut *inluminentur* rudes | 72, 22–24 |
| 46 | Boniface | all Anglo-Saxons | '[Deus] vult omnes homines *salvos* fieri et ad *agnitionem veritatis* venire' | 74, 1–2 |
| | | | [obsecrate ut pagani Saxones] '*resipiscant* a diabuli laqueis' | 75, 4 |
| 52 | Zacharias | Witta | *inluminatori* [...] Iesu Christo gratias egimus | 93, 11–13 |
| 53 | Zacharias | Burchard | *illuminatori* [sic] [...] Iesu Christo gratias agimus | 94, 31 to 95, 1 |
| 57 | Zacharias | Boniface | per predicationem [...] mundum *inluminarent* universum | 103, 1–3 |
| | | | *inluminatio* predicationis atque doctrine Christi presidio mansit et manet catholica Dei ecclesia *praefulgens* horum et beati apostolorum principis Petri *inluminata* doctrinis | 103, 3–6 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Boniface | Eadburg | speciosi pedes portantium *lucernam* pacis evangelicae | 137, 19–20 |
| | | | pater [...] perficiat *lucernas* ardentes in manibus nostris et *inluminet* corda gentilium | 137, 21–23 |
| | | | '[Deus] vult omnes homines *salvos* fieri et ad *agnitionem veritatis* venire' | 138, 2–3 |
| 85 | Theoph. | Boniface | vestrae sanctissime paternitatis *inluminatos* doctrinis | 190, 16–17 |
| 101 | Wiehtberht | monks of Glastonbury | '[Deus] vult omnes homines *salvos* fieri et ad *agnitionem* venire *veritatis*' | 224, 10–11 |
| 106 | Boniface | Optatus | *lux* evangeliorum gloriae Christi | 232, 14–15 |

## 3. Mission as Harvest

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Bugga | Boniface | debuisti manifeste *messem* Dei *metere et congregare* sanctarum animarum *manipulos in horream* regni caelestis | 27, 12–14 |
| 23 | Daniel | Boniface | [Bonifatius], qui *saxea steriliaque* actenus gentilium corda fidei magnitudine fretus fiducialiter adgrediendo *vomere* evangelice predicationis infatigabiliter *subigens in glebas fertiles* cotidiano labore convertere niteris | 38, 18–21 |
| 24 | Gregory II | Boniface | 'Obsecrate dominum *messis*, ut eiciat operarios in *messem* suam' | 41, 31 to 42, 1 |
| 26 | Gregory II | Boniface | *ager* dominicus, qui *incultus* iacebat et *spinarum aculeis* ex infidelitate riguerat *vomerem* tuae doctrinae *exarantem semen* verbi suscepit et *fertilem messem* protulit fidelitatis | 44, 18–21 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 54 | Gemmulus | Boniface | in opere, quo adsumptus es, multo amplius *fructum* boni operis *pullulare* concedat [...] divina maiestas | 97, 16–19 |
| 60 | Zacharias | Boniface | dum dominici *triciti semina* quaereres elaborare ad augendum *segetem* spiritalem, subito inimici *superseminant zizania*, ut sanctitatem tuam in bono opere impediant | 120, 23–26 |
| | | | spiritales *sarculos* construens et *zizaniam* eradicens deportet ad *conburendum* | 120, 28–29 |
| 63 | Boniface | Daniel | Et *semen* verbi, quod de sinu catholicae et apostolicae ecclesiae sumptum et nobis commendatum *seminare* aliquantulum studemus, illi cum *lolio superseminare* et *suffocare* nituntur vel in *herbam pestiferi generis* convertere | 129, 15–19 |
| 64 | Daniel | Boniface | *segetem* vestrae venerabilitati commissam *sterile lolium interserendo suffocare* conentur; quia unique ante *messis maturitatem* in quodam commate *conpescitur evelli* | 133, 20–22 |
| | | | 'quia proposita est similitudo *tritici* et *zizaniorum* de permixtione malorum atque bonorum' | 134, 34–35 |
| 76 | Boniface | Huetbert | 'neque qui *plantet* neque qui *inrigat* est aliquid, sed Deus qui incrementum dat' | 159, 9–10 |
| 111 | Cuthbert | Boniface | sacraeque exhortationis *fructum* | 239, 11 |
| 148 | ? | ? | tende, ubi *messis* est Deo adiuvante | 284, 2 |
| | | | '*Messis* quidem multa, operarii autem pauci' et cetera | 284, 3 |

## 4. Mission as Turbulence, Danger, and Suffering

(Note association with <u>peregrinatio</u>.)

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Boniface | Bugga | pro peccatis meis multis *tribulationibus* fatigor et multo maiore mentis *tribulatione* et *sollicitudine* quam corporis labore *conturbor* | 49, 4–6 |
| 30 | Boniface | Eadburg | *periculosi* maris *tempestatibus quatior* | 54, 16–17 |
| 31 | Boniface | ? | *periculosi* maris *tempestatibus* undique *quatimur* | 55, 7–8 |
| 32 | Boniface | Pehthelm | nobis opus est *periclitantibus*<br><br>Germanicum mare *periculosum* est navigantibus | 55, 21<br><br>55, 22–23 |
| 33 | Boniface | Nothelm | [navis] mentis meae variis Germanicarum gentium *tempestatum fluctibus quassatam* | 57, 1–2 |
| 34 | Boniface | Duddo | senis Germanici maris *tempestatibus* undique *quassantibus fatigati* | 58, 29 to 59, 1 |
| 35 | Boniface | Eadburg | sepe sive in *solamine* librorum sive vestimentorum adiuvamine pietas tua *tristitiam* meam consolata est | 60, 12–14 |
| 38 | Boniface | Alhere | ne [navis nostra] *fluctibus* Germanicarum *tempestatum* submergatur | 63, 12–13 |
| 49 | Lul and others | Cuniburg | nostram lintrem *procellosis fluctibus* huius mundi *fatigatam* | 79, 5–6 |
| 63 | Boniface | Daniel | inter tales *turbines* diversarum causarum<br><br>de uno *solacio* <u>peregrinationis</u> meae | 130, 13–14<br><br>131, 4–5 |
| 64 | Daniel | Boniface | pari tamen *tribulationum deprimimur* fasce. | 136, 21–22 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Boniface | Eadburg | conversatio <u>peregrinationis</u> nostrae variis *tempestatibus inliditur*. Undique labor, undique *meror*. 'Foris *pugnae*, intus *timores*'. | 137, 12–14 |
| 66 | Boniface | ? | multis et variis *tempestatum turbinibus concussi* et *quassati* sumus | 138, 13–14 |
| | | | cottidiana *tribulatio* divina *solamina* fratrum ac sororum me quaerere admonet | 138, 27–28 |
| 67 | Boniface | Leobgytha and others | *tribulationes* cordis nostri dilatate sunt | 139, 24 |
| | | | 'Multae *tribulationes* iustorum, sed de his omnibus liberavit eos Dominus' | 140, 23–24 |
| 70 | Lul | Eadburg | flagito, ut meae fragilitatis navem, quae cotidie presentis mundi *procellarum turbinibus quatiatur*, tuae stabilitatis suffragio fulciatur | 143, 12–15 |
| 71 | Lul | Dealwin | ad *consolationem* <u>peregrinationis</u> meae | 144, 19–20 |
| 72 | Ingalice | Lul | insinuasti nobis erga vos diversas *molestias* et *tribulationes* | 145, 13–14 |
| 76 | Boniface | Huetbert | grande *solacium* <u>peregrinationis</u> nostrae | 159, 16–17 |
| 91 | Boniface | Egbert | Enarrare autem omnia *mala*, quae nos extrinsecus et intrinsecus *patimur*, epistolaris brevitas prohibet | 207, 12–14 |
| 92 | Lul | Gregory | Festinatio autem ad te veniendi propter multiplicem *tribulationem*, quam iugiter Deo gratias sustinemus, mihi undique denegata est | 211, 24–27 |
| 100 | Lul | Leobgytha | valde rarus est, qui *tribulationes* meas mecum pare velit | 223, 25–26 |
| | | | Vale in Deo intercedens pro me tanto anixius, quanto *graviore angustia deprimor* | 223, 27–28 |
| 101 | Wiehtberht | monks of Glastonbury | valde sit *periculosum* ac laboriosum pene in omne re | 224, 25 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 111 | Cuthbert | Lul | diversarorum atque indefessarum *tribulationum angores* [...] inter *persecutores* paganos et hereticos atque scismaticos seductores in tam *periculosa* ac *ferocitate plena* <u>peregrinatione</u> | 239, 19–24 |
| | | | quanta *pericula* atque *difficultates* [...] [Bonifatius] libenter tolleraret | 242, 11–13 |
| 121 | Alchred | Lul | te in tam longa <u>peregrinatione</u> desudantem et in Christi *agonibus decertantem* optatae conservavit sospitati | 257, 15–17 |
| 123 | Cyneheard | Lul | obsecrantes, ut [...] usque ad finem firmam retineatis, quandam multis *tribulationibus tundimini* | 260, 18–20 |
| 137 | Wigberht | Lul | multum iam vitae nostrae *fluctuando* et *neglegendo*, quasi extra nos fusi, <u>peregrimus</u> | 276, 19–21 |

# The Terms *Germania* and *Germanicum* in the Letters of Boniface and Lul

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Gregory II | all Christians | 'in umbra mortis' aliquas gentes in *Germaniae* partibus vel plaga orientali Reni fluminis | 30, 7–8 |
| 20 | Gregory II | C. Martel | informatum ad predicandum plebibus *Germaniae* gentis ac diversis in orientali Reni fluminis parte consistentibus | 34, 9–10 |
| 24 | Gregory II | Boniface | in partibus Esperiarum ad inluminationem *Germaniae* gentis 'in umbra mortis' sedentis | 42, 4–5 |
| | | | Thuringis et *Germaniae* populo ea, quae ad animae respiciunt utilitatem et salutem, scribere non omisimus | 42, 32–33 |
| 28 | Gregory III | Boniface | Bonifatio coepiscopo ad inluminationem gentis *Germaniae* vel circumquaque in umbra mortis morantibus gentibus in errore constitutis [...] directo | 49, 14–17 |
| 30 | Boniface | Eadburg | quae sanctorum librorum munera transmittendo exulem *Germanicum* spiritali lumine consolata est [...] qui tenebrosos angulos *Germanicarum* gentium lustrare debet | 54, 10–13 |
| 32 | Boniface | Pehthelm | *Germanicum* mare periculosum est navigantibus | 55, 22–23 |
| 33 | Boniface | Nothelm | navem mentis meae variis *Germanicarum* gentium tempestatum fluctibus quassatam | 57, 1–2 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 | Boniface | Duddo | *Germanici* maris tempestatibus undique quassantibus fatigati | 58, 29 to 59, 1 |
| 38 | Boniface | Aldhere | ne [navis nostra] fluctibus *Germanicarum* tempestatum submergatur | 63, 12–13 |
| | | | Petimus quoque, ut pro *Germanicis* gentis [sic] idolorum culturae deditis intercedere curetis | 63, 22–23 |
| 43 | Gregory III | Hessians, Thuringians and other tribes | populo provinciarum *Germaniae*, Thuringis et Hessis, Bortharis et Nistresis, Uuedreciis et Lognais, Suduodis et Graffeltis vel omnibus in orientali plaga constitutis | 68, 10–14 |
| 45 | Gregory III | Boniface | Agnoscentes [...] tam de *Germaniae* gentibus [...] quae a te acta sunt | 72, 1–6 |
| 46 | Boniface | Anglo-Saxon Christians | de stirpe et prosapia Anglorum procreatis eiusdem generis vernaculus universalis ecclesiae legatus *Germanicus* [...] Bonifacius | 74, 25–27 |
| 49 | Lul and others | Cuniburg | ad *Germanicas* gentes transivimus | 78, 18–19 |
| 50 | Boniface | Zacharias | *Germaniae* populis aliquantulum percussis vel correctis tres ordinavimus episcopos et provinciam in tres parrochias discrevimus | 81, 16–18 |
| | | | postulamus, ut [...] per auctoritatem et preceptum sancti Petri iussionibus apostolicis fundatae et stabilite sint tres in *Germania* episcopales sedes | 81, 26–28 |
| 52 | Zacharias | Witta | innotuit [...] Bonifatius nuper decrevisse et ordinasse in *Germaniae* partibus episcopales sedes | 93, 7–9 |
| 53 | Zacharias | Burchard | innotuit [...] Bonifatius nuper decrevisse et ordinasse in *Germaniae* partibus episcopales sedes | 94, 26–29 |
| 54 | Gemmulus | Boniface | Bonifatio archiepiscopo provinciae *Germaniae* | 96, 8–9 |
| 59 | [Roman synod of 745] | | 'Deneardus religiosus presbiter legatus Bonifatii sanctissimi archiepiscopi provinciae *Germaniae*' | 109, 12–14 |

| Tangl ep. # | Sender | Recipient | Terms and Expressions | Reference (pp., ll.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | Zacharias | Boniface | usque ad paganorum fines et in partes *Germanicarum* gentium, ubi antea predicasti | 121, 28–30 |
| 63 | Boniface | Daniel | ipsos paganorum ritus et sacrilegia idolorum in *Germania* sine illius mandato et timore prohibere valeo | 130, 20–21 |
| 73 | Boniface | Æthelbald | Bonifatius archiepiscopus legatus *Germanicus* Romanae ecclesiae | 146, 25–26 |
| 75 | Boniface | Egbert | Bonifatius servus servorum Dei legatus *Germanicus* sedis apostolicae | 156, 30 to 157, 1 |
| | | | ad predicandum *Germaniae* erroneis vel paganis gentibus direxit | 157, 16–17 |
| 76 | Boniface | Huetbert | nos inter feras et ignaras gentes *Germaniae* laborantes | 159, 4 |
| 78 | Boniface | Cuthbert | Bonifatius legatus *Germanicus* catholice apostolice Romane [sic] ecclesiae | 161, 28–29 |
| 86 | Boniface | Zacharias | [Bonifatius] legatus *Germanicus* | 192, 1 |
| | | | me indignum ordinavit et ad predicandum verbum fidei *Germanicis* gentibus misit | 192, 17–18 |
| 87 | Zacharias | Boniface | ad predicandum verbum evangelii tuam misisset fraternitatem in *Germaniae* partibus | 195, 7–8 |
| 91 | Boniface | Egbert | Bonifatius exiguus episcopus legatus *Germanicus* catholicae et apostolicae Romanae ecclesiae | 206, 30 to 207, 1 |
| 109 | Boniface | Stephen II | Bonifatius exiguus legatus vel missus *Germanicus* catholicae et apostolicae Romanae aecclesiae | 234, 27 to 235, 1 |

# Property Held by Hersfeld
# in Hessia before 775

| Name in *Breviarium sancti Lulli* [1] | Modern name | No. in Map 20 |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 1a]** | | |
| Martdorf | Mardorf | (1) |
| Holzhusen | Holzhausen | (2) |
| Firne | Verna | (3) |
| Burcun | Borken | (4) |
| Sungsule | Sondheim | (5) |
| Angelgise | Kleinenglis | (6) |
| Waltunniu | Wellen | (7) |
| Iuffelze | Giflitz | (8) |
| Nielahc | Nilach | (9) |
| Balahorna | Balhorn | (10) |
| Harabirge | Herberge | (11) |
| Rittahe | Großenritte | (12) |
| Stochusun | Stockhausen | (13) |
| Mathanon | Maden | (14) |
| Hebilide | Hebel | (15) |

[1] Edited in *Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld*, ed. by Weirich, p. 73, ll. 15–29. See Map 20, p. 363.

| Name in *Breviarium sancti Lulli* | Modern name | No. in Map 20 |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 1b]** | | |
| Filmare | Vellmar | (16) |
| Elisungen | Oberelsungen | (17) |
| Mazheim | Mosheim | (18) |
| Wildungen | Bad Wildungen | (19) |
| Beisheim | Niederbeisheim | (20) |
| Felmide | Velmeden | (21) |

**Total property: 50 *hobas* and 30 *mansus***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 2]** | | |
| Bracho | Braach | (22) |
| Breidinge | Breitingen | (23) |
| Biberaho | Bebra | (24) |
| Heginebahc | Heinebach | (25) |

**Total property: 12 *hobas* and 23 *mansus***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 3]** | | |
| Kyricheim | Kirchheim | (26) |
| Liutgeshusen | unknown | |
| Otraho | Ottrau | (28) |
| Grintafo | Grenff | (29) |

**Total property: 18 *hobas* and 18 *mansus***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 4]** | | |
| Treise | Treysa | (30) |
| Grosiun | Grüsen | (31) |
| Waraha | Wohra | (32) |

**Total property: 13 *hobas* and 12 *mansus***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **[Group 5]** | | |
| Niwihusen | unknown | |

**Total property: 4 *hobas* and 4 *mansus***

# Patrons of Fulda in the
# Amöneburg District, *c.* 750–79

| Donor(s) | Settlement | Modern place (no. on Map 21) | *UBF* charter no. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adelbirc | *in Lógene partibus iuxta Amana fluvium* | 'In the Lahn region, next to the river Ohm' | 117 |
| Adelburch | *Lundorf* | Lohndorf (9) | 108 |
|  | *Salzbutine* | Salzböden (15) | 108 |
|  | *Lôoh* | Loch, nr. Lohndorf (9) | 108 |
|  | *Roda* | Rödgen, nr. Gießen | 108 |
| Adelman and Uodalswint | *Lare* | Lahr, nr. Gießen, or Lohra (10) | 111 |
| Adelolt | *unum biuanc sui nominis Adeloltes* | 'one *biuanc* named after Adelolt himself', probably Albshausen (1)[1] | 110 |

[1] I have noted the location of a village named *Albshausen* on Map 21, but a more likely identification is with the Albshausen 5 km west of Wetzlar on the lower Lahn. See *UBF*, p. 181 n. 1.

| Donor(s) | Settlement | Modern place (no. on Map 21) | *UBF* charter no. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adeltrud | *Seltrese* | Selters, nr. Nassau | 120 |
| | *Bûchen* | Buchen[2] | 120 |
| | *Mainlinten* | Freienfels, in lower Lahn valley | 120 |
| | *Neistinbach* | Heistenbach, in lower Lahn valley | 120 |
| Altrat | *Rosdorf* | Rossdorf (14) | 119 |
| | *Holhus* | Rauischholzhausen (8) | 119 |
| | *Brettenbrunnen* | unknown | 119 |
| | *Hocheim* | unknown | 119 |
| | *Sibenbrunnen* | unknown[3] | 119 |
| Arahgoz | *Marachdorf* | Mardorf (11) | 121 |
| | *Rosdorf* | Rossdorf (14) | 121 |
| | *in ipsa marcha Logene* | 'in the Lahngau region' | 121 |
| Arcgoz and Luibbirc/Argoz and Lipgart[4] | *Blidenstat* | unknown[5] | 105, 116 |
| | *Rostorf/Rûesdorf* | Rossdorf (14) | 106, 116 |

[2] There are three places named *Buchen* in Hesse, north of Frankfurt but south of the region shown on Map 21, any one of which could be the *Bûchen* named in *UBF*, no. 120. See *UBF*, p. 186 n. 2.

[3] All of the properties donated by Altrat were located 'super ripam fluminis, quod dicitur Antrafa', according to Stengel the Rülfbach, a tributary of the Ohm. Both Rossdorf and Rauischholzhausen lie on the Rülfbach, and there are several known deserted medieval settlements upstream. A spring running into the Rülfbach is known locally as the Sieborn, after which *Sibenbrunnen* was presumeably named. See *UBF*, p. 185 nn. 2–6.

[4] Presumably the *comes* Arcgoz and his wife Luibbirc of *UBF*, no. 105, are to be identified with Argoz and his wife Lipgart of *UBF*, no. 116. See *UBF*, p. 178 n. 1. The donations recorded in *UBF*, no. 106, were given in Argoz's name alone, but he is explicitly identified with the Argoz of *UBF*, no. 105 ('item idem Argoz tradidit').

[5] Only the name of *Blidenstat* is given in *UBF*, no. 105, but in *UBF*, no. 116, it is described as lying 'super ripam fluminis Amana in pago Logenecgewe', i.e., on the banks of the Ohm in Lahngau.

| Donor(s) | Settlement | Modern place (no. on Map 21) | UBF charter no. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arcgoz, etc., *(continued)* | *Saláha* | ? Sehlen (16)[6] | 116 |
| | *Holzhusen* | Rauischholzhausen (8) | 116 |
| | *Affaltráhe* | Affoldern[7] | 116 |
| | *Seleheim* | Groß-Seelheim (5) | 116 |
| | *in monte, qui dicitur Hagenesberch* | 'on the rise known as the Hahnes', between Hof Capelle and Moischt (6) | 116 |
| | *Zegemunden* | ? Gemünden (4)[8] | 116 |
| | *Weterstat* | ? Wetter (17)[9] | 116 |
| | *Neazzaha* | Hof Netz (7)[10] | 116 |
| | *Vfleida* | Ober-Ofleiden (12) | 116 |
| | *Eulizedorf* | Ebsdorf (3) | 116 |
| | *Boia* | ? Beuern (2)[11] | 116 |

[6] This is the most likely location in the opinion of Stengel; he mentions an alternative suggestion of Groß-Seelheim near Kirchhain or Seelbach near Lohra (*UBF*, p. 178 n. 4). Groß-Seelheim, however, where Argoz also held land, is called *Seleheim* in *UBF*, no. 116.

[7] Stengel (*UBF*, p. 183 n. 7) declines to identify *Affaltrahe* with Affoldern, which lies on the Eder 12 km upstream of Büraburg, although he does not explain why; it may have seemed too far removed from Argoz's other holdings to be plausible. According to Wand, Affoldern is first attested as *Affeltra* in a charter of *c.* 850 (Wand, *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar*, p. 155). I am inclined to equate *Affaltrahe* and *Affeltra*, since although Affoldern is located some 40 km north of Amöneburg, it was within the bounds of the Frankish-dominated frontier zone, and only 7 km west of *Waltunniu*/Wellen, where Charlemagne granted property to the monastery of Hersfeld *c.* 775 (see Weirich, *UBH*, no. 38(2), p. 73, l. 16).

[8] Other possiblities for Gemünden given by Stengel (*UBF*, p. 184 n. 1) are Burg- or Nieder-Gemünden, twin villages which lie approximately 15 km south-east of Amöneburg.

[9] According to Stengel (*UBF*, p. 184 n. 2), the Wetter south of Christenberg is a far more likely candidate than Wetterburg, 30 km north of Fritzlar.

[10] There is a Netze just 6 km north of Affoldern (see n. 7, above), but the proximity of Hof Netz to Amöneburg makes it the better choice.

[11] Stengel (*UBF*, p. 184 n. 6) suggests the deserted medieval settlement of Beuern north of Amöneburg.

| Donor(s) | Settlement | Modern place (no. on Map 21) | *UBF* charter no. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arcgoz, etc., *(continued)* | *Suvgia* | ? Hof Sorge[12] | 116 |
| | *Witmane* | unknown | 116 |
| | *Rudingesbach* | Rudigenbach[13] | 116 |
| Bidanc | *Walchesdorf* or *Walehestorf* | Walsdorf, in lower Lahn valley | 109a/b |
| | *Megeratesheim* or *Meinratesheim* | unknown | 109a/b |
| | *Wolemare* or *Wâlmare* | Wollmar (18) | 109a/b |
| Dithart | *Ebilezdorf* | Ebsdorf (3) | 118 |
| Nenthere and Hadalouch | *Ebelizdorf* | Ebsdorf (3) | 115 |
| | *Rosdorf* | Rossdorf (14) | 115 |
| Rudun | *Rodohusen* | Radenhausen (13) | 112 |
| | *Holzhusen* | Rauischholzhausen (8) | 113 |
| | *Biberaffa* | unknown | 113 |
| | *Ebilizdorfe* | Ebsdorf (3) | 113 |
| | *Luntdorfe* | Lohndorf (9) | 113 |
| | *Hocheim* | unknown[14] | 113 |
| | *Heledungen* | unknown | 113 |
| | *et ceteris locis* | 'and in other places' | 113 |
| Ruthart and Ruothardus | *Rutharteshusen* | unknown[15] | 107a/b |

[12] Possibly Hof Sorge near Burg-Gemünden, 15 km south-east of Amöneburg.

[13] According to Stengel (*UBF*, p. 184 n. 8), a deserted medieval settlement near Kirchhain, which lies 3 km north of Amöneburg.

[14] Most likely the same Hocheim where Altrat held the land donated in *UBF*, no. 119; see n. 3, above.

[15] *UBF*, no. 107a names *Rutharteshusen*, while *UBF*, no. 107b (the pair represents two abbreviated versions of the same original charter) specifies that it lies 'super ripam fluminis Liutera, ubi ipse rivulus intrat flumen Amana', i.e., on the banks of the Liutera, where that stream joins the Ohm. The identity of the Liutera has been lost. See Stengel, *UBF*, p. 179 n. 3.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Manuscripts

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 183
Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501
Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bonifatianus 2
Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS Rastatt 22
London, British Library, MS Harley 3895
Marburg, Staatsarchiv, MS Bestand K 244
Melk, Benediktinerstiftes Melk, Cod. 597
Merseburg, Domkapitel, Cod. 136
Munich, Staatsbibliothek, MS Lat. 8112
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Lat. Palat. 485
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Lat. Palat. 577
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 751

## Primary Sources

Latin primary sources and translations are listed by the Anglicized name of the original author. Works whose authors are unknown or disputed are listed alphabetically under 'Anon.'. Publications containing the works of multiple authors are listed by editor.

Adam of Bremen, *Adams Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. by B. Schmeidler, MGH SS rer. Germ., 2 (1917)
Æthilwald, *Carmina rythmica II*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 528–33
Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by R. Ehwald, MGH SS, Auctores antiquissimi, 15 (1919)
——, *Carmina ecclesiastica*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 11–32

——, *Carmina rhythmica*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 517–37

——, *De metris et enigmatibus et pedum regulis*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 33–204

——, *Epistulae*, in *Aldhelmi opera*, ed. by Ehwald, pp. 475–503

——, *The Poetic Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

——, *The Prose Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Lapidge and M. Herren (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979)

Anon., *Annales Alamannici*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 24–30

Anon., *Annales Fuldenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 337–414

Anon., *Annales Guelferbtytani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 25–31

Anon., *Annales Laubacenses*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 7–15

Anon., *Annales Laureshamenses*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 24–39

Anon., *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. by B. von Simson, MGH SS rer. Germ., 10 (1905)

Anon., *Annales Nazariani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 25–31

Anon., *Annales Petaviani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 7–18

Anon., *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. by F. Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ., 6 (1895)

Anon., *Annales sancti Amandi*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 6–14

Anon., *Annales Tiliani*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, ed. by Pertz, pp. 6–8

Anon., *The Annals of Fulda*, trans. by T. Reuter, Ninth-Century Histories, 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992)

Anon., *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by Boretius, pp. 68–70

Anon., *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV*, in *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov., 2 (1888), pp. 1–193

Anon., *E Martyrologio Fuldensi*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 59–61

Anon., *Ex miraculis S. Liutwini auct. monacho Mediolacensi*, ed. by H. V. Sauerland, in MGH SS, 15. 2 (1888), pp. 1261–68

Anon., *Het Leven als Leerschool: Preken van Bonifatius*, ed. and trans. by A. Jelsma (Laren: Esplanade, 2003)

Anon., *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by Boretius, pp. 222–23

Anon., *Interrogationes et responsiones baptismales*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, ed. by Boretius, p. 222

Anon., *Passio Kiliani martyris Wirziburgensis*, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici III*, ed. by Levison, pp. 711–28

Anon., *Sermones*, in *Octavi saeculi ecclesiastici scriptores maxima ex parte recensentur […]*, PL, LXXXIX (1850), cols 843–72

Anon., *Sermones*, in *Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum historicorum, dogmatiorum, moralium, amplissima collectio*, ed. by E. Martène and U. Durand, 9 vols (Paris: 1724–33), IX, 186–218

Anon., *Vita Ceolfridi*, in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 388–404

Anon., *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, ed. by A. Hofmeister, in MGH SS, 30. 2 (1926), pp. 789–95

Anon., *Vita quarta Bonifatii auctore Moguntino*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 90–106

Attenborough, F. L., ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922)

Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, ed. by J. J. O'Donnell, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

——, *De catechizandibus rudibus*, ed. by J. B. Bauer, CCSL, 46 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969)

——, *De fide et operibus*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XL (1845), cols 197–230

——, *Sermo CCLXXVIII*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XXXIX (1846), cols 2268–71

——, *Sermo CVII*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XXXIX (1846), cols 1957–59

——, *Sermo LXXV*, in *Opera ominia*, PL, XXXVIII (1845), cols 475–79

Bately, J., ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, III: *MS A* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969)

——, *Epistola ad Ecgbertum episcopum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 405–23

——, *Hexameron*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XCI (1850), cols 9A–190C

——, *Historia abbatum*, in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, pp. 364–87

——, *Homilia XXI*, in *Opera omnia*, PL, XCIV (1850), cols 110B–114D

——, *Vita sancti Cuthberti*, in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 141–307

Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St Benedict in Latin and English*, ed. and trans. by J. McCann (London: Burns & Oates, 1952)

*Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. by Socii Bollandiani, 3 pts (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901)

Boniface of Mainz, *Ænigmata Bonifatii*, ed. by F. Glorie, in CCSL, 133 (1968), pp. 273–343

——, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, ed. by G. J. Gebauer and B. Löfstedt, CCSL, 133B (1980)

——, *Bonifatii carmina*, in *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini, I*, ed. by E. Dümmler, MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini, 1 (1881), pp. 3–23

——, *Sämtliche Schriften des Heiligen Bonifacius*, ed. and trans. by P. H. Külb (Regensburg: Manz, 1859)

Boretius, E., ed., *Capitularia regum Francorum I*, MGH Capit., 1 (1883)

Burchard of Worms, *Decretum*, in *Burchardi Vormatiensis episcopi opera omnia*, PL, CXL (1855), cols 537–1058

Cassius Dio, *Dio's Roman History*, ed. and trans. by E. Cary, 9 vols (London: Heinemann, 1914–27)

Douglas, David C., ed., *English Historical Documents*, I: *500–1042*, ed. and trans. by D. Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Methuen, 1979)

Dronke, E. F. J., ed., *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis* (Kassel: Fischer, 1850; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1962)

——, ed., *Traditiones et antiquitates Fuldenses* (Kassel: Fischer, 1844; repr. Osnabrück: Zeller, 1966)

Dümmler, E., ed., *S. Bonifatii et Lulli epistolae*, in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, MGH, Epistolae, 3 (1892), pp. 215–433

Eigil, *Eigilis vita S. Sturmi abbatis Fuldensis*, in *Scriptores rerum Sangallensium: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 2 (1829), pp. 365–77

——, *The Life of St Sturm*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 181–202

——, *Vita Sturmi*, in *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigils von Fulda: Literarkitisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, ed. by P. Engelbert, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 29 (Marburg: Historische Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 1968)

Einhard, *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS rer. Germ., 25 (1911)

Ekkebert of Hersfeld, *Vita sancti Haimeradi presbiteri*, in *Annales et chronica aevi Salici: Vitae aevi Carolini et Saxonici*, ed. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, 10 (1852), pp. 598–607

Emerton, E., trans., *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940; repr. 2000)

Ermgassen, H. Meyer zu, ed., *Der Codex Eberhardi des Klosters Fulda*, 3 vols (Marburg: Elwert, 1996–2007)

Felix, *Felix's Life of St Guthlac*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956)

Flower, R., and H. Smith, eds, *The Parker Chronicle and Laws (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 173): A Facsimile* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941)

Franke, T., *Breviarium sancti Lulli: Ein Hersfelder Güterverzeichnis aus dem 9. Jahrhundert. Faksimileausgabe* (Bad Hersfeld: Selbstverlag Landkreis Hersfeld-Rothenburg, 1986)

Fros, H., ed., *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, *novum supplementum* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1986)

Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom (London: Phillimore, 1978)

Glöckner, C., *Codex Laureshamensis*, 3 vols (Darmstadt: Verlag des historischen Vereins für Hessen, 1929–36)

Gordon, I. L., ed., *The Seafarer* (London: Methuen, 1960)

Gregory of Tours, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum X*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov., 1. 1 (1937)

Gregory the Great, *S. Gregorii Magni Registrum epistolarum, libri VIII–XIV*, ed. by D. L. Norberg, CCSL, 140A (1982)

Haddan, A. W., and W. Stubbs, eds, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878)

Hincmar of Reims, *Epistola Synodali Carisiacensis ad Hludowicem regem Germaniae Directa*, in *Capitularia regum Francorum II*, ed. by A. Boretius and V. Krause, MGH Capit., 2 (1890), pp. 427–41

Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *The Hodoeporicon of St Willibald*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 153–77

——, *Vita Willibaldi*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 86–106

——, *Vita Wynnebaldi*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 106–17

Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarvm sive originvm*, ed. by W. M. Lindsey, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911)

Jaffé, P., ed., *Monumenta Moguntina*, Bibliotheca rerum Germanicarum, 3 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1866)

——, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*: *Ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII* (Berlin: Weidemann, 1851)

Jakobs, H., ed., *Germania Pontificia IV: Provincia Maguntinensis IV; S. Bonifatius, Archidioecesis Maguntinensis, Abbatia Fuldensis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978)

Jelsma, A., ed. and trans., *Het Leven als Leerschool: Preken van Bonifatius* (Laren: Esplanade, 2003)

Jonas of Bobbio, *Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius libri II*, in *Ionae vita sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. by B. Krusch, MGH SS. rer. Germ., 37 (1905), pp. 144–294

Julian the Apostate, *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, ed. and trans. by W. C. Wright, 3 vols (London: Heinemann, 1913–23)

Krusch, B., and W. Levison, eds, *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici III*, MGH SS rer. Merov., 5 (1910)

Külb, P. H., ed. and trans., *Sämtliche Schriften des Heiligen Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen*, 2 vols (Regensburg: Manz, 1859)

Lampert of Hersfeld, *Lamperti monarchi Hersfeldensis opera*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS rer. Germ., 38 (1894)

Levison, W., ed., *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Mogutini*, MGH SS rer. Germ., 57 (1905)

Liebermann, M., ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 2 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16)

Liudger, *Vita Gregorii abbatis Traiectensis*, ed. by W. Levison, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 63–79

Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, ed. and trans. by C. Bailey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947)

Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti abbatis Friteslariensis*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 36–43

Martin of Braga, *Cultura, Relixión e Superticións na Galicia Sueva: Martiño de Braga 'De correctione rusticorum'*, ed. by J. E. López Pereira, Monografías, 39 (La Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, Servicio de publicaciones, 1996)

Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus [...] Series Latina*, 221 vols (Paris: Migne, 1844–64)

Mühlbacher, E., ed., *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Großen*, MGH, Diplomatum Karolinorum, 1 (1906)

Nennius, *British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. by J. Morris, Arthurian Period Sources, 8 (London: Phillimore, 1980)

O'Donovan, M. A., ed., *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters, 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Otloh, *Vitae Bonifatii auctore Otloho libri duo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 111–217

Pertz, G. H., ed., *Annales et chronica aevi Carolini*, MGH SS, 1 (1826)

——, ed., *Chronica aevi Suevici*, MGH SS, 23 (1874)

Pirmin, 'Pirmins *Scarapsus*: Einleitung und Edition', ed. by E. Hauswald (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universität Konstanz, 2006)

Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*, VII: *Libri XXIV–XXVII*, ed. and trans. by W. H. S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966)

Plummer, C., ed., *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896)

Pseudo-Iona, *Vita Vulframni episcopi Senonici auctore Pseudo-Iona*, in *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici III*, ed. by Levison, pp. 657–73

Radbod, *Vita altera Bonifatii auctore Radbodo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 62–78

Rudolf of Fulda, *The Life of Saint Leoba*, in *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 205–26

——, *Vita Leobae abbatissae Biscofesheimensis*, ed. by G. Waitz, in MGH SS, 15. 1 (1887), pp. 118–31

Sawyer, P. H., *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968)

Schnetz, J., ed., *Itineraria Romana*, II: *Ravennatis anonymi cosmographia et Guidonis geographica* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1942)

Sickel, Theodor, ed., *Die Urkunden Konrad I., Heinrich I. und Otto I.*, MGH, Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae, 1 (1879)

Stengel, E. E., ed., *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 10. 1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1958)

Stephen of Ripon, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927)

Strabo, *The Geography of Strabo*, ed. and trans. by H. L. Jones, 8 vols (London: Heinemann, 1917–32)

Tacitus, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ed. by H. Furneaux, H. F Pelham, and C. D. Fisher, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906–07)

——, *The Annals of Tacitus*, ed. by F. R. D. Goodyear, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

——, *Germania*, in *Cornelii Taciti opera minora*, ed. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Ogilvie, Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 37–62

——, *Germania*, ed. and trans. by J. B. Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Talbot, C. H., ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1954)

Tangl, M., ed., *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, MGH, Epistolae selectae, 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916; repr. MGH, 1989)

Theodore, *Poenitentiali Theodori*, in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878), III, 173–203

Virgil, *Eclogues*, ed. and trans. by W. Clausen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)

——, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid I–IV*, ed. by H. R. Fairclough, rev. by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)

Weirich, H., ed., *Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck, 19. 1 (Marburg: Elwert, 1936)

Werminghoff, A., ed., *Concilia aevi Karolini I*, MGH, Concilia, 2. 1 (1902)

William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)

——, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by R. Mynors, R. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–99)

Willibald of Mainz, *Leben des heiligen Bonifazius*, in *Die Geschichtsschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit*, ed. and trans. by M. Tangl, 90 vols (Leipzig: Dyk, 1884–1928), XIII (1920), 1–144

——, *The Life of St Boniface*, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. and trans. by Talbot, pp. 25–62

——, *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, ed. by Levison, pp. 1–58

## Secondary Sources

Abram, C., 'Aldhelm and the Two Cultures of Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Literature Compass*, 4 (2007), 1354–77

Achebe, C., *Things Fall Apart* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1986)

Addyman, P. V., and D. Leigh, 'The Anglo-Saxon Village at Chalton, Hampshire: Second Interim Report', *Medieval Archaeology*, 17 (1973), 1–25

Alcock, L., *Economy, Society and Warfare among the Britons and Saxons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1987)

Aldridge, R. E., 'The Lost Ending of the Didache', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 53 (1999), 1–15

Alexander, L. M., 'The Legal Status of the Native Britons in Late Seventh-Century Wessex as Reflected by the Law Code of Ine', *Haskins Society Journal*, 7 (1995), 31–38

Algermissen, H. J., preface to *Verspielen wir das Erbe des hl. Bonifatius?*, ed. by A. Odenthal and others, pp. 7–8

Altenberg, K., *Experiencing Landscapes: A Study of Space and Identity in Three Marginal Areas of Medieval Britain and Scandinavia*, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology, 31 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Viksell, 2003)

Amanieu, A., 'Archidiacre', in *Dictionnaire du droit canonique*, ed. by R. Naz, 7 vols (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1924–65), I (1935), cols 948–1004

Ament, H., 'Merowingische Grabhügel', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 63–93

Amman, H., 'Der hessische Raum in der mittelalterlichen Wirtschaft', *HJL*, 8 (1958), 37–70

Amory, P., *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Anderton, M., ed., *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: Beyond the Emporia* (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1999)

Andrews, P., ed., *Excavations at Hamwic*, II: *Excavations at Six Dials*, CBA Research Report, 109 (York: CBA, 1997)

Andrießen, K., *Siedlungsnamen in Hessen: Verbreitung und Entfaltung bis 1200* (Marburg: Elwert, 1990)

Angenendt, A., 'Concilium Germanicum', in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, ed. by W. Kasper, 3rd edn, 3 vols (Freiberg i.Br.: Herder, 1993–2001), II (1996), 1289–90

——, 'Der Taufritus im frühen Mittelalter', in *Segni et riti nella chiesa altomediovale occidentale*, SSCI, 33 (1987), pp. 275–321

——, 'Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, I, 52–79

——, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997)

——, *Monachi Peregrini: Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters* (Munich: Fink, 1972)

——, review of Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 49 (1998), 156–57

Anton, H. H., 'Liutwin: Bischof von Trier und Gründer von Mettlach; Zugleich ein Beitrag zu dem historischen Wandlungsprozeß im ausgehenden siebenten und im frühen achten Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Saargegend*, 38/39 (1990/91), 21–51

Appadurai, A., 'The Production of Locality', in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. by R. Fardon (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 204–25

Aris, M.-A., 'Erzähltes Sterben: Der Tod des Bonifatius im Spiegel der Bonifatiusviten', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 111–26

Arnold, W., *Ansiedlungen und Wanderungen deutscher Stämme, zumeist nach hessischen Ortsnamen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1881)

Baatz, D., 'Römische Eroberungen unter den flavischen Kaisern, Bau des Limes', in *Die Römer in Hessen*, ed. by D. Baatz and F.-R. Herrmann (Hamburg: Nikol, 2002), pp. 66–83

Bach, A., 'Chatti-Hassi: Zur Deutung des Namens der Hessen', *HJL*, 4 (1954), 1–20

——, *Deutsche Namenkunde*, 3 vols (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1952–56)

Backhaus, F., 'Besitzkarte frühkarolingische Klöster', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 44–50

——, 'Die Gaue vor und nach 900', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 41–43

Barker, K., 'Sherborne in Dorset: An Early Ecclesiastical Settlement and its Estate', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 3 (1984), 1–33

Barker, K., and N. Brooks, eds, *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010)

Barlow, F., 'The English Background', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 11–29

Barrett, J., 'Agency, the Duality of Structure and the Problem of the Archaeological Record', in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. by I. Hodder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 140–64

——, comment on Tilley's 'Round Barrows and Dykes', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 14 (2004), 199

——, 'The Monumentality of Death: The Character of Early Bronze Age Mortuary Mounds in Southern Britain', *World Archaeology*, 22 (1990), 179–89

Bartholemew, P., 'Continental Connections: Angles, Saxons and Others in Bede and in Procopius', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13 (2006), 19–30

Bassett, S., 'Church and Diocese in the West Midlands: The Transition from British to Anglo-Saxon Control', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 13–40

——— , 'Medieval Ecclesiastical Organisation in the Vicinity of Wroxeter and its British Antecedents', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 145 (1992), 1–28

——— , 'Medieval Lichfield: A Topographical Review', *Transactions of the South Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 22 (1982), 95–98

Bately, J., 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 64 (1978), 93–129

Beaston, L., 'The Wanderer's Courage', *Neophilogus*, 89 (2005), 119–37

Becher, M., 'Die Sachsen im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert: Verfassung und Ethnogenese', in *799 Kunst und Kultur der Karolingerzeit: Karl der Große und Papst Leo III. in Paderborn*, ed. by C. Stiegemann and M. Wemhoff, 3 vols (Mainz: von Zabern), I, 188–94

Beck, H., 'Donar-Þorr', in *RGA*, VI (1986), 1–7

Beck, H., and M. Lundgreen, 'Merseburger Zaubersprüche', in *RGA*, XIX ( 2001), 601–05

Beck, H., and others, eds, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd edn, 35 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973– )

Becker, A., 'Mattium', in *RGA*, XIX (2000), 443–44

Bellah, R. N., 'Religious Evolution', *American Sociological Review*, 29 (1964), 358–74

Bergmann, J., *Die Altenburg bei Niedenstein*, Führer zur nordhessischen Ur- und Frühgeschichte, 1 (Kassel: Hessisches Landesmuseum, 1965)

Berschin, W., *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, III: *Karolingische Biographien, 750– 920 n.Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters, 10 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1991)

Best, W., *Funde der Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit aus der frühgeschichtlichen Siedlung Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 12. 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1990)

Best, W., and H. Löwen, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der mittelalterlichen Wallburg Gaulskopf bei Warburg-Ossendorf, Kr. Höxter', *Germania*, 75 (1997), 159–92

Beumann, H., 'Eigils Vita Sturmi und die Anfänge der Klöster Hersfeld und Fulda', *HJL*, 2 (1952), 1–15

——— , 'Hersfelds Gründungsjahr', *HJL*, 6 (1956), 1–24

Bigelmair, A., 'Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 247–87

Biller, P., 'Words and the Medieval Notion "Religion"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985), 351–69

Birbeck, V., and others, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton: Excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's Stadium, 1998–2000* (Salisbury: Wessex Archaeology, 2005)

Bird, M. F., *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007)

Bischoff, B., *Die Abtei Lorsch im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften*, 2nd edn (Lorsch: Laurissa, 1989)

——— , 'Paläographische Fragen deutscher Denkmäler der Karolingerzeit', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 5 (1971), 101–34

Bjork, R. E., '*Sundor æt Rune*: The Voluntary Exile of the Wanderer', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by Liuzza, pp. 315–27

Blair, J., 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Topographical Review', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 226–66

——, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

——, 'Ecclesiastical Organisation and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *Early Medieval England*, 4 (1995), 193–212

——, 'Introduction: From Minster to Parish Church', in *Minsters and Parish Churches*, ed. by Blair, pp. 1–19

——, ed., *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950–1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988)

Blair, J., and R. Sharpe, eds, *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992)

Bloch, M., *Feudal Society*, I: *The Growth of Ties of Dependence*, trans. by L. A. Manyon (London: Routledge, 1965)

Boehmer, H., 'Zur Geschichte des Bonifatius', *ZHG*, 50 (1917), 171–215

Böhme, H. W., 'Adelsgräber im Frankenreich: Archäologische Zeugnisse zur Herausbildung einer Herrenschicht unter den merowingischen Königen', *Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, 40 (1993), 397–534

——, 'Franken in Althessen — aus archäologische Sicht', *HJL*, 50 (2000), 77–92

——, 'Franken oder Sachsen? Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte in Westfalen vom 4.–7. Jahrhundert', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung*, 12 (1999), 43–73

——, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen Elbe und Loire*, Münchner Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 19, 2 vols (Munich: Beck, 1974)

Böhme, H. W., and others, *Karben-Okarben, Wetteraukreis — Grabfunde des 6.–7. Jahrhunderts: Ausgrabungen in einem fränkischen Friedhof in der südlichen Wetterau*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 56 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1987)

Böhmer, J. F., and E. Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii*, I: *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, 751–918* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1908)

Bonner, G., ed., *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London: SPCK, 1976)

Born, M., 'Grundzüge der Siedlungsentwicklung im Kreis Fritzlar-Homberg', *Hessische Heimat*, 7 (1957/58), 14–19

Bosch, D. J., 'Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission', in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*, ed. by J. M. Phillips and R. T. Coote (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 175–92

——, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, 16 (New York: Orbis, 1991)

Bradley, R., *Altering the Earth: The Origins of Monuments in Britain and Continental Europe* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1993)

——, *An Archaeology of Natural Places* (London: Routledge, 2000)

——, 'Mental and Material Landscapes in Prehistoric Britain', in *Landscape: The Richest Historical Record*, ed. by D. Hooke, Society for Landscape Studies Supplementary Series, 1 (Amesbury: Society for Landscape Studies, 2000), pp. 1–11

——, 'Time Regained: The Creation of Continuity', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 140 (1987), 1–17

Bradley, R. S., M. K. Hughes, and H. F. Diaz, 'Climate in Medieval Time', *Science*, 302 (2003), 404–05

Brandner, C. A., and others, *Der Bonifatiusweg: Die Wurzeln Europas Entdecken* (Fulda: Parzeller, 2004)

Brate, E., 'Disen', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung*, 13 (1911/12), 143–52

Brather, S., and H.-P. Wotzka, 'Alemannen und Franken? Bestattungsmodi, ethnische Identitäten und wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse zur Merowingerzeit', in *Soziale Gruppen — kulturelle Grenzen: Die Interpretation sozialer Identitäten in der prähistorischen Archäologie*, ed. by S. Burmeister and N. Müller-Scheeßel (Berlin: Waxmann, 2006), pp. 139–224

Braudel, F., *On History*, trans. by S. Matthews (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980)

Brauer, K.-W., 'Ein heiliger Berg im Knüll?', *Mein Heimatland*, 45 (2006), 13–14

Brecht, G., 'Erläuterungen zu den Kunstbeilagen', in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Quedlinburg*, ed. by K. Janicke, Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen, 2, 2 vols (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1873–82), II, pp. xc–cv

Brechter, S., 'Das Apostolat des heiligen Bonifatius und Gregors des Grossen Missionsinstruktionen für England', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 22–33

Breeze, A., 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 614 and Brean Down, Somerset', *Notes & Queries*, n.s., 51 (2005), 234–35

Brendow, V., and J. Kulick, *Die Johanneskirche bei Züschen: Führungsblatt zu der Wüstung auf dem Johanneskirchenkopf bei Züschen, Stadt Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 23 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpfege Hessen, 1982)

Brink, S., 'Mythologising Landscape: Place and Space of Cult and Myth', in *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte: Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23.12.2001*, ed. by M. Stausberg (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 76–112

——, 'Political and Social Structures in Early Scandinavia II: Aspects of Space and Territoriality — the Settlement District', *Tor*, 29 (1997), 389–437

Brisbane, M., 'Hamwic (Southampton): An 8th-Century Port and Production Centre', in *The Rebirth of Towns in the West, AD 700–1050*, ed. by R. Hodges and B. Hobbley, CBA Research Report, 68 (London: CBA, 1988), pp. 101–08

Brooks, N., 'Alfredian Government: The West Saxon Inheritance', in *Alfred the Great*, ed. by T. Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 153–74

——, *Anglo-Saxon Myths: State and Church, 400–1066* (London: Hambledon, 2000)

Brown, G. H., 'An Iconographic Explanation of *The Wanderer*, lines 81b–82a', *Viator*, 9 (1978), 31–38

Brown, P., *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967)

——, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

——, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992)

——, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002)

Brown, S., 'The Matthean Community and the Gentile Mission', *Novum Testamentum*, 22 (1980), 193–221

Brück, J., 'Experiencing the Past? The Development of a Phenomenological Archaeology in British Prehistory', *Archaeological Dialogues*, 12 (2005), 45–72

——, 'In the Footsteps of the Ancestors: A Review of Tilley's *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments*', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 15 (1998), 23–36

Brunner, H., 'Der Reiterdienst und die Anfänge des Lehnwesens', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanische Abteilung*, 8 (1887), 1–38

Büttner, H., 'Das Erzstift Mainz und die Sachsenmission', *Jahrbuch für das Bistum Mainz*, 5 (1950), 314–28

Cambridge, E., and D. Rollason, 'The Pastoral Organisation of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"', *Early Medieval Europe*, 4 (1995), 87–104

Carver, M. O. H., 'Conversion and Politics on the Eastern Seaboard of Britain: Some Archaeological Indicators', in *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. by B. E. Crawford (St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 1998), pp. 11–40

——, 'Introduction: Northern Europeans Negotiate their Future', in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. by M. O. H. Carver (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), pp. 3–13

——, 'Reflections on the Meanings of Monumental Barrows in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, ed. by Lucy and Reynolds, pp. 132–43

Chadwick, H. M., *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905)

Champion, T., 'Chalton', *Current Archaeology*, 59 (1977), 364–69

Charles-Edwards, T., 'Anglo-Saxon Kinship Revisited', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 171–210

——, 'The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*', in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. by M. Lapidge, CSASE, 11 (1995), pp. 141–74

——, 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', *Celtica*, 11 (1976), 43–59

Cherniss, M. D., *Ingeld and Christ: Heroic Concepts and Values in Old English Poetry* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972)

Christlein, R., 'Besitzabstufungen zur Merowingerzeit im Spiegel reicher Grabfunde aus West- und Süddeutschland', *Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums*, 20 (1973), 147–80

——, *Die Alamannen: Archäologie eines lebendigen Volkes* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1978)

Christmann, E., 'Der Wandel von *Wodensberg* zu *Gudensberg*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 67 (1944), 362–68

Clark, G., 'Pilgrims and Foreigners: Augustine on Travelling Home', in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Ellis and Kidner, pp. 149–58

Classen, W., *Die kirchliche Organisation Althessens im Mittelalter*, Schriften des Instituts für geschichtliche Landeskunde von Hessen und Nassau, 8 (Marburg: Elwert, 1929)

Clay, J.-H. W., 'Gift-Giving and Books in the Letters of St Boniface and Lul', *Journal of Medieval History*, 35 (2009), 313–25

——, 'Landscapes of Conversion in Eighth-Century Hessia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Anglo-Saxon Mission of St Boniface' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2008)

——, 'Sacred Landscapes and the Conversion of Eighth-Century Hessia', *Landscapes*, 9. 2 (2009), 1–25

Coates, R., 'On Some Controversy Surrounding *Gewissae/Gewissei*, *Cerdic* and Ceawlin', *Nomina*, 13 (1990), 1–11

Constable, G., *Monastic Tithes from their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964)

——, '*Nona et decima*: An Aspect of Carolingian Economy', *Speculum*, 35 (1960), 224–50

Copley, G. J., *The Conquest of Wessex in the Sixth Century* (London: Phoenix House, 1954)

Corcos, N., 'Churches as Pre-historic Ritual Monuments: A Review and Phenomenological Perspective from Somerset', *Assemblage*, 6 (2001) <http://www.assemblage.group.shef.ac.uk/issue6/Corcos_web.html> [accessed 31 July 2009]

Corradini, R., M. Diesenberger, and H. Reimitz, eds, *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middles Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts* (Leiden: Brill, 2003)

Cosgrove, D. E., *Social Formation and the Symbolic Landscape* (London: Helm, 1984)

Cox, J. L., 'Missionaries, the Phenomenology of Religion and "Re-presenting" Nineteenth-Century African Religion: A Case Study of Peter McKenzie's "Hail Orisha!"', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 31 (2001), 336–53

Cramer, P., *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages, c. 200–c. 1150* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Cramp, R., 'Monkwearmouth and Jarrow: The Archaeological Evidence', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. by Bonner, pp. 5–18

Cruel, R., *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Dermold: Meyer, 1879)

Cubitt, C., *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, c. 650–c. 850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995)

——, 'Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 29–66

——, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Social Identity*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrell, pp. 253–76

Cünnen, J., *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten: Angelsächsische Frauenbriefe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2000)

Curta, F., ed., *Borders, Barriers and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005)

Dahl, N. A., *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977)

Davidson, H. E., *Roles of the Northern Goddess* (London: Routledge, 1998)

Debus, F., 'Ortsnamen des Kreises Wolfhagen', in *Heimatbuch Wolfhager Land*, I, ed. by Pädagogischer Arbeitskreis Wolfhagen (Wolfhagen: Papier-Wolf, 1966), pp. 18–25

——, 'Zur Gliederung und Schichtung nordhessischer Ortsnamen', *HJL*, 18 (1968), 27–61

de Jong, M., *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden: Brill, 1996)

——, 'Monastic Prisoners or Opting Out? Political Coercion and Honour in the Frankish Kingdoms', in *Topographies of Power*, ed. by de Jong, Theuws, and van Rhijn, pp. 291–328

——, 'Rethinking Early Medieval Christianity: A View from the Netherlands', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 261–76

de Jong, M., F. Theuws, and C. van Rhijn, eds, *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2001)

de Reu, M., 'The Missionaries: The First Contact between Paganism and Christianity', in *Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Milis, trans. by Guest, pp. 13–37

Demandt, K. E., *Geschichte des Landes Hessen*, 2nd edn (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1978)

——, 'Hessische Frühzeit', *HJL*, 3 (1953), 35–56

——, *Quellen zur Rechtsgeschichte der Stadt Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, Veröffentliche des historischen Kommissions für Hessen und Waldeck, 13. 3 (Marburg: Elwert, 1939)

Demyttenaere, A., *The Claustralization of the World* (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 1997)

Dennis, K., 'Fictus Lupus: The Werewolf in Christian Thought', *Classical Folia*, 30 (1976), 57–80

Dickins, B., 'English Names and Old English Heathenism', *Essays and Studies*, 19 (1934), 148–60

Dickinson, T. M., *Cuddesdon and Dorchester-on-Thames: Two Early Anglo-Saxon 'Princely' Sites in Wessex*, BAR British Series, 1 (Oxford: Hedges, 1974)

Diederichs, U., and C. Hinze, eds, *Hessische Sagen* (Düsseldorf: Diderichs, 1978)

Diekamp, W., 'Die Wiener Handschrift der Bonifatius-Briefe', *Neues Archiv*, 9 (1884), 9–28

Diekstra, F. N. M., '*The Wanderer* 64b–72: The Passions of the Mind and the Cardinal Virtues', *Neophilogus*, 55 (1971), 73–88

Diem, A., *Das monastische Experiment: Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens* (Münster: Lit, 2005)

——, 'Encounters between Monks and Demons in Latin Texts of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages', in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. by K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus, and T. Hofstra, Germania Latina, 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), pp. 51–67

Dierkens, A., 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*', in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychology*, ed. by H. Hasquin (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984)

Dietz, M., 'Itinerant Spirituality and the Late Antique Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in *Travel, Communication and Geography*, ed. by Ellis and Kidner, pp. 125–34

——, *Wandering Monks, Virgins and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, AD 300–800* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005)

Dowden, K., *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2000)

Dronke, P., *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*: *A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Duckett, E., *The Wandering Saints* (London: Collins, 1959)

Dumézil, G., *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*, ed. and trans. by E Haugen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973)

Dumville, D. N., 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 23–50

——, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer and I. Woods (Leeds: School of History, University of Leeds, 1977), pp. 72–104

——, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 21–66

——, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 1–32

Dunn, M., *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000)

Durkheim, E., *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by C. Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Effros, B., *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003)

——, 'Monuments and Memory: Repossessing Ancient Remains in Early Medieval Gaul', in *Topographies of Power*, ed. by de Jong, Theuws, and van Rhijn, pp. 93–118

Eggers, H., 'Die Annahme des Christentums im Spiegel der deutschen Sprachgeschichte', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 466–504

Ellis, L., and F. L. Kidner, eds, *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity*: *Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

Erhart, P., '"Carta ista amalfitana est et nescitur legere": The Charters of Cava dei Tirreni and their Evidence for Early Medieval Archival Practice', *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 50 (2007), 27–39

Ekwall, E., 'Some Notes on English Place-Names Containing Names of Heathen Deities', *Englische Studien*, 70 (1935), 55–59

Eliade, M., *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. by W. R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959)

Elias, N., *The Civilizing Process*, trans. by E. Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994)

Embree, L., ed., *Encyclopaedia of Phenomenology* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997)

Evans, C., 'Tradition and the Cultural Landscape: An Archaeology of Place', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 4 (1985), 80–94

Ewig, E., 'Milo et eiusmodi similes', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 412–40

——, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*: *Gesämmelte Schriften (1952–1973)* (Munich: Artemis, 1979)

Faith, R., *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997)

Faull, M. L., 'The Semantic Development of Old English Wealh', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s., 8 (1975), 20–44

Fell, C. E., 'Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by H. Damico and A. H. Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 29–43

Felten, F. J., ed., *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, Mainzer Vorträge, 9 (Mainz: Steiner, 2004)

——, 'Zur Einführung in die Vortragsreihe: Bonifatius — Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert', in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Felten, pp. 11–32

Felten, F. J., J. Jarnut, and L. E. von Padberg, eds, *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken: Die Gestaltung des christlichen Europa im Frühmittelalter*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 121 (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 2007)

Finberg, H. P. R., *The Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1964)

——, *Lucerna* (London: Macmillan, 1964)

Flaskamp, F., 'Bonifatius und die Sachsenmission', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 6 (1916), 273–90

——, 'Das Bistum Erfurt: Ein Beitrag zur thüringisch-sachsischen Kirchengeschichte', *Zeitschrift für vaterländische Geschichte und Altertumskunde Westfalens*, 83 (1925), 1–26

——, 'Der Bonifatiusbrief von Herford', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 44 (1962), 315–34

——, 'Wilbrord-Clemens und Wynfith-Bonifatius', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 157–72

Fleming, A., 'Phenomenology and the Megaliths of Wales: A Dreaming Too Far?', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 18 (1999), 119–25

——, 'Post-processual Landscape Archaeology: A Critique', in *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 16 (2006), 267–80

Fleming, R., 'Bones for Historians: Putting the Body Back in Biography', in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. by D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 29–48

Fletcher, R., *The Conversion of Europe*: *From Paganism to Christianity, AD 371–1386* (London: Fontana, 1997)

Flood, G. D., *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (London: Cassell, 1999)

Foot, S., 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Review of Terminology', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 212–25

——, '"By Water in the Spirit:" The Administration of Baptism in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 171–92

——, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Förstemann, E., *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, 3 vols (Bonn: Hanstein, 1900–13)

Fouracre, P., *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: Longman, 2000)

Frantzen, A. J., 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 23–56

Frazer, J. G., *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1922)

Frazer, W. O., and A. Tyrell, eds, *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000)

Frey, L. H., 'Exile and Elegy in Anglo-Saxon Epic Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 62 (1963), 293–302

Fritze, W., 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen in die Mainzer Diözese', *HJL*, 4 (1954), 37–63

Fulford, M. G., and S. J. Ripon, 'Lowbury Hill, Oxon: A Re-assessment of the Probable Romano-Celtic Temple and Anglo-Saxon Barrow', *Archaeological Journal*, 151 (1994), 185–88

Ganshof, F.-L., *Feudalism*, trans. by P. Grierson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996)

Garrison, M., 'The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 114–61

——, 'Letters to a King and Biblical Exempla: The Example of Cathuulf and Clemens Peregrinus', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 305–28

——, '"Send More Socks": On the Mentality and the Preservation Context of Medieval Letters', in *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, ed. by M. Mostert, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 69–99

Geake, H., 'Persistent Problems in Seventh-Century Burial', in *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, ed. by Lucy and Reynolds, pp. 144–55

——, *The Use of Grave-Goods in Conversion Period England, c. 600–850*, BAR British Series, 261 (Oxford: Hedges, 1997)

Geary, P. J., 'Barbarians and Ethnicity', in *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World*, ed. by G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, and O. Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 107–29

——, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)

——, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)

Gelling, M., 'Further Thoughts on Pagan Place-Names', in *Otium et Negotium: Studies in Onomatology and Library Science Presented to Olof von Feilitzen*, ed. by F. Sandgren (Stockholm: Kungliga Biblioteket, 1973), pp. 109–28 (repr. in *Place-Name Evidence for the Anglo-Saxon Invasion and Scandinavian Settlements*, ed. by K. Cameron (Nottingham: English Place-Names Society, 1975), pp. 99–114)

——, 'Place-Names and Anglo-Saxon Paganism', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 8 (1961), 7–25

——, *Signposts to the Past* (London: Dent, 1978)

Gem, R., 'Church Buildings: Cultural Location and Meaning', in *Church Archaeology: Research Directions for the Future*, ed. by J. Blair and C. Pyrah, CBA Research Report, 104 (York: CBA, 1996), pp. 1–6

Gensen, R., *Althessens Frühzeit: Frühgeschichtliche Fundstätten und Funde in Nordhessen*, Führer zur hessischen Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 1 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1979)

——, 'Christenberg, Burgwald und Amöneburger Becken in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 121–72

——, *Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 77 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1989)

——, 'Der Christenberg bei Münchhausen und seine Bedeutung', *HJL*, 18 (1968), 14–26

——, *Die chattische Großsiedlung von Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1978)

——, 'Die Frühgeschichte des Fritzlaren Raumes', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 10–40

——, 'Die frühgeschichtliche Siedlung von Fritzlar-Geismar', in *Der Schwalm-Eder Kreis*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 114–24

——, *Die Höfe bei Dreihausen*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 121 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1995)

——, 'Ein Adelsgrab aus Eschwege-Niederhone', *FH*, 9/10 (1969/70), 92–100

——, 'Ein Frauengrab des 7. Jahrhunderts aus Fritzlar', *FH*, 12 (1972), 34–45

——, 'Ein Keramikkomplex mit dem Schlussdatum 753 von Christenberg, Gde. Münchhausen am Christenberg, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf', in *Archäologische Beiträge zur Geschichte Westfalens (Festschrift K. Günther)*, ed. by D. Bérenger, Internationale Archäologie, Studia Honoria, 2 (Rahden: Leidorf, 1997), pp. 219–28

——, 'Frühmittelalterliche Burgen und Siedlungen in Nordhessen', in *Ausgrabungen in Deutschland*, 4 vols (Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, 1975), I, 313–34

——, 'Kat. 158: Frühmittelalterliche Siedlung bei Geismar', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 240–41

Gerchau, J., *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988)

Giangrosso, P., 'The Merseburg Charms', in *Medieval Germany: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by J. M. Jeep (London: Garland, 2001), pp. 112–14

Giddens, A., *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984)

Gillett, A., ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002)

Glare, P. G. E., ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Glatthaar, M., *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte, 17 (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2004)

Gneuss, H., *Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001)

Gockel, M., 'Die Franken in Althessen: Interdisziplinäre Ansätze frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsforschung', in *HJL*, 50 (2000), 57–76

——, 'Fritzlar und das Reich', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter: Festschrift zur 1250-Jahrfeier*, ed. by W. Schlesinger (Fritzlar: Magistrat der Stadt Fritzlar, 1974), pp. 89–120

——, 'Siedlungsnamen-Typen I und II', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 185–89

Goetz, H.-W., 'Der Herzogtum der Billunger: Ein sächsischer Sonderweg?', in *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte*, 66 (1994), 167–97

——, 'Introduction', in *Regna et gentes: The Relationship between Late Antiquity and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 1–11

Goffart, W., *Rome's Fall and After* (London: Hambledon, 1989)

Göldner, H., and K. Sippel, 'Spätmerowingische Gräber unter der Kirche von Niedenstein-Kirchberg, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *Archäologische Korrespondenzblatt*, 11 (1981), 65–77

Görich, W., 'Rast-Orte an alter Straße? Ein Beitrag zur hessischen Straßen- und Siedlungsgeschichte', in *Festschrift Edmund E. Stengel zum 70. Geburtstag am 24. Dezember 1949* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1952), pp. 473–94

Gottschalk, J., 'Die Bonifatius Literatur von 1923 bis 1950', *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige*, 62 (1950), 237–46

Green, D. H., 'The Influence of the Merovingian Franks on the Christian Vocabulary of German', in *Franks and Alamanni in the Merovingian Period: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. by I. N. Wood (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 343–59

——, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Green, D. H., and F. Siegmund, eds, *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003)

Greenaway, G. W., 'Saint Boniface as a Man of Letters', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 33–46

——, *Saint Boniface: Three Biographical Studies for the Twelfth Centenary Festival* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955)

Greenfield, S. B., 'The Formulaic Expression of the Theme of "Exile" in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 200–06

Grimm, J., *Deutsche Mythologie*, 4th edn, 3 vols (Berlin: Dümmlers, 1875–78)

——, 'Über zwei entdeckte Gedichte aus der Zeit der deutschen Heidentums', in *Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* (Berlin: Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1824), pp. 1–14

Grimm, J., and W. Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, 7th edn, 3 vols (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1857; repr. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980)

Grimmer, M., 'British Christian Continuity in Anglo-Saxon England: The Case of Sherborne/ *Lanprobi*', *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association*, 1 (2005), 51–64

Grünewald, C., 'Archäologie des frühen Mittelalters vom 5. bis zum 9. Jahrhundert in Westfalen ein Überblick', *Archäologie in Ostwestfalen*, 9 (2005), 71–86

Guenther, K., 'Defining and Shaping the Moral Self in the Ninth Century: Evidence from the Baptismal Tracts and the Reception of Augustine's *De Trinitate*' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of York, 2006)

Gundermann, G., 'Ausgrabungsbericht', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 7 (1899), 207–24

Guth, W., 'Onomastische Überlegungen zu einem historischen Problem', *ZHG*, 113 (2008), 1–16

——, 'Ortswüstungen und andere wüste Siedelstellen bei Niedenstein-Kirchberg', *ZHG*, 109 (2004), 51–70

Haarberg, R., 'Die mittelalterliche Keramik in Niederhessen', *HJL*, 23 (1973), 1–61

Hahn, H., *Bonifaz und Lul: Ihre angelsächsischen Korrespondenten, Bischof Luls Leben* (Leipzig: Veit und Comp, 1883)

——, 'Die angeblichen Predigten des Bonifaz', *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, 24 (1884), 583–625

——, 'Die Briefe und Synoden des Bonifaz', *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, 15 (1875), 97–115

——, *Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reiches* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1863)

——, 'Kat. 211.1: Fulda Domplatz-Bereich', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 300–07

Hall, T. A., *Minster Churches in the Dorset Landscape*, BAR British Series, 304 (Oxford: Hedges, 2000)

Halsall, G., 'Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier: The So-called "Föderatengräber" Reconsidered', in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by W. Pohl and H. Reimitz,

Denkschriften der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 287 (Vienna: Öster-
reichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), pp. 167–80

——, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West*
(Glasgow: Cruithne, 1995)

——, 'The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilization*: Forty Years On', in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A
Crisis of Identity?*, ed. by J. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1992), pp. 196–206

——, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London: Routledge, 2003)

Hamerow, H., 'The Archaeology of Early Anglo-Saxon Settlements: Past, Present and Future', in
*Landscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by
N. Christie (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 301–16

——, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in North-Western Europe,
400–900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Hansel, K., 'Das Stift St. Viktor von Mainz', *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, 54 (1959), 1–11

Härke, H., 'All Quiet on the Western Front? Paradigms, Methods and Approaches in West
German Archaeology', in *Archaeological Theory in Europe: The Last Three Decades*, ed. by
I. Hodder (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 187–222

——, 'Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?', *Current Anthropology*, 39 (1998),
19–45

——, 'Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite in the
Seventh Century', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*,
ed. by M. O. H. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 149–65

——, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Social Structure', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 125–70

——, 'Intentionale und funktionale Daten: Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und Methode der Gräber-
archäologie', *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 23 (1993), 141–46

——, '"Warrior graves?" The Background of the Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite', *Past and Present*, 126
(1990), 22–43

Hartmann, C., 'Die Tierwelt', in *Landschaftsrahmenplan Naturpark Habichtswald*, ed. by Heintze,
pp. 27–34

Hase, P. H., 'The Church in the Wessex Heartlands', in *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex*,
ed. by M. Aston and C. Lewis (Oxford: Oxbow, 1995), pp. 47–81

—— , 'The Mother Churches of Hampshire', in *Minsters and Parish Churches*, ed. by Blair,
pp. 45–66

Hauck, K., *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 4 vols (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1914–25)

——, 'Völkerwanderungszeitliche Bilddarstellungen des zweiten Merseburger Spruchs als Zugang
zu Heiligtum und Opfer', in *Vorgeschichtlicher Heiligtümer und Opferplätze in Mittel- und
Nordeuropa*, ed. by H. Jankuhn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 297–319

——, 'Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa', *Frühmittelalterlichen
Studien*, 1 (1967), 3–93

Hawkes, S. C., and G. Grainger, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Worthy Park, Kingsworthy, near
Winchester, Hampshire* (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2003)

Heather, P., 'The Barbarian in Late Antiquity: Image, Reality and Transformation', in *Con-
structing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. by R. Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 234–58

Hederich, M., *Zierenberg in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1962)

Hefner, R. W., 'Introduction: World Building and the Rationality of Conversion', in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. by R. W. Hefner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 3–44

Heidegger, M., *Sein und Zeit* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1927)

Heiler, F., *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, 2nd edn (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1979)

Heinemeyer, K., 'Bonifatius: Mönch und Reformer', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 73–76

—— , 'Die Anfänge der Stadt Kassel', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 13–30

—— , 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation', *HJL*, 30 (1980), 1–45

—— , *Königshöfe und Königsgut im Raum Kassel*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 33 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971)

Heiner, R., *Studien an Siedlungskeramik*: *Ausgewählte Merkmale und Fundkomplexe der Latène- und römischen Kaiserzeit aus der Siedlung Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 12. 1 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1994)

Heintel, H., 'Ein eisenzeitliches Hügelgräberfeld bei Kirchberg, Kr, Fritzlar-Homberg', *FH*, 2 (1962), 129–40

Heintze, G., ed., *Landschaftsrahmenplan Naturpark Habichtswald* (Darmstadt: Institut für Naturschutz, 1971)

Hen, Y., 'The *Annals of Metz* and the Merovingian Past', in *Uses of the Past*, ed. by Hen and Innes, pp. 175–90

—— , *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, 481–751* (Leiden: Brill, 1995)

Hen, Y., and M. Innes, eds, *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Hengel, M., *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983)

Hennecke, K., 'Miszellen zur Kirchengeschichte Altsachsens', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 54 (1935), 52–86

Herren, M. W., 'Aldhelm the Theologian', in *Latin Learning and English Lore*, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe and Orchard, I, 68–89

Herrmann, F.-R., ed., *Der Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 8 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1986)

—— , 'Ein frühmittelalterlicher Friedhof bei Liebenau', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 145–47

—— , ed., *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 7 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1986)

Hessen-Rotenberg, Landgraf Hermann zu, *Das Werraland in der Beschreibung Niederhessens von Landgraf Hermann zu Hessen-Rotenburg 1641*, ed. by O. Perst, Aus dem Werraland, 7 (Eschwege: Rossbach, 1960)

Heßler, C., *Hessischer Sagenkranz: Sagen aus Kurhessen*, 4th edn (Kassel: Vietor, 1928)

Hill, J., and M. Swan, eds, *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, International Medieval Research, 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998)

Hinchliffe, J., 'An Early Medieval Settlement at Cowage Farm, Foxley near Malmesbury', *Archaeological Journal*, 143 (1986), 240–59

Hines, J., ed., *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997)

——, 'The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 7 (1984), 49–59

——, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', in *The Continental Saxons*, ed. by Green and Siegmund, pp. 299–314

Hinton, D., 'Hampshire's Anglo-Saxon Origins', in *The Archaeology of Hampshire from the Palaeolithic to the Industrial Revolution*, ed. by S. J. Shennan and R. T. Schadla Hall (Aldershot: Hampshire Field Club, 1981), pp. 56–65

Hirsch, E., 'Landscape: Between Place and Space', in *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, ed. by E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 1–30

Hobsbawm, E., 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1–14

Hodder, I., 'Converging Traditions: The Search for Symbolic Meanings in Archaeology and Geography', in *Landscape and Culture*, ed. by J. M. Wagstaff (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 134–45

——, 'The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 1994), pp. 393–402

——, *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Hodges, R., *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement: Archaeology and the Beginnings of English Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989)

Holdsworth, C., 'Boniface the Monk', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 49–67

Holton, F. S., 'Old English Sea Imagery and the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 12 (1982), 208–17

Honselmann, K., 'Der Brief Gregors III. an Bonifatius über die Sachsenmission', *Historiches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft*, 76 (1957), 83–106

Hood, J. E., 'Social Relations and the Cultural Landscape', in *Landscape Archaeology*, ed. by Yamin and Methany, pp. 121–46

Hooke, D. 'The Anglo-Saxons in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries: Aspects of Location in Time and Space', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 65–99

——, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1998)

——, *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon Charter-Bounds*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 2 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990)

Hörle, J., '*Breviarium sancti Lulli*: Gestalt und Inhalt', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 12 (1960), 18–52

Horner, S., 'En/closed Subjects: *The Wife's Lament* and the Culture of Early Medieval Female Monasticism', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by Liuzza, pp. 381–91

Hoskins, W. G., *The Westward Expansion of Wessex* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1960)

Howe, N., *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Yale University Press, 1989)

Hubert, F., '*Volksturm* as Paradigm: Germanic People and Gallo-Romans in Early Medieval Archaeology since the 1930s', in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillett, pp. 177–200

Hufschmidt, F., *Versuch einer Geschichte des oberen Warmetals* (Wolfhagen: Bosser, 1905)

Huhn, J., 'Der Agnellus-Brief *De ratione fidei* nach einer Handschrift im Codex Bonifatianus II', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 102–38

Hummer, H. J., 'The Fluidity of Barbarian Identity: The Ethnogenesis of the Alemanni and Suebi, AD 200–500', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 1–27

——, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Hundt, H. J., 'Neue Funde aus dem fränkischen Reihengräberfeld in Goddelsheim', *Hessenland*, 48 (1937), 307–15

Husserl, E., *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Erstes Buch; Allgemeine Einführungen in die reine Phänomenologie*, ed. by K. Schuhmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1977)

Hyland, H. P., 'Missionary Nuns and the Monastic Vocation in Anglo-Saxon England', *American Benedictine Review*, 47 (1996), 141–74

Imhof, I., and G. K. Stasch, eds, *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2004)

Innes, M., *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

Jakobi, F.-J., 'Zur Frage der Nachkommen der heiligen Ida und der Neuorientierung des sächsischen Adels in der Karolingerzeit', in *Heilige Ida von Herzfeld, 980–1980: Festschrift zur tausendjährigen Wiederkehr ihrer Heiligsprechung*, ed. by Géza Jaśzai (Münster: Gemeinde, 1980), pp. 53–63

James, E., 'Cemeteries and the Problem of Frankish Settlement in Gaul', in *Names, Words and Graves: Early Medieval Settlement*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), pp. 55–89

——, 'Merovingian Cemetery Studies and Some Implications for Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries, 1979*, ed. by P. Rahtz, T. Dickinson, and L. Watts, BAR British Series, 82 (Oxford: Hedges, 1980), pp. 36–41

James, S., A. Marshall, and M. Millett, 'An Early Medieval Building Tradition', *Archaeological Journal*, 141 (1984), 182–215

Janke, H., 'Grabhügelfunde aus der Umgebung Wetzlars: Fundbestände verschiedener Zeitstellung aus einer Privatsammlung', *FH*, 37/38 (1997/98), 39–127

Jarnut, J., 'Bonifatius und die fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743–48)', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, 109, Kanonistische Abteilung, 66 (1979), 1–26

Jarnut, J., U. Nonn, and M. Richter, eds, *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001)

Jäschke, K.-U., 'Die Gründung der mitteldeutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum', in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger*, ed. by H. Beumann, 2 vols (Cologne: Böhlau, 1973–74), II, 71–136

Jellema, D., 'Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages', *Speculum*, 30 (1955), 15–36

Jellinghaus, H., *Die westfälischen Ortsnamen nach ihren Grundwörtern*, 3rd edn (Osnabrück: Schöningh, 1923)

Jestädt, W., *Die Geschichte der Stadt Fritzlar: Festschrift zum 1200jährigen Bestehen der Stadt Fritzlar, 724–1924* (Fritzlar: self-published by Jubiläumsausschusses der Stadt Fritzlar, 1924)

John, E., *Land Tenure in Early England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1960)

——, 'The Point of Woden', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 6 (1993), 127–34

Johnson, M., *Ideas of Landscape* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006)

Jones, C., 'Interpreting the Perceptions of Past People', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, 15 (1998), 7–22

Kahl, H.-D., 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtliche Mittelalters', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 11–76

Kappel, I., 'Archäologische Fundstellen und Funde aus vorgeschichtlicher Zeit im Stadtgebiet von Zierenberg', in *Zierenberg, 1293–1993*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg, pp. 36–41

——, 'Der Hohlestein bei Ahnatal-Weimar', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 202–05

——, 'Die Schauenburg (Schaumburg) bei Hoof', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 216–19

——, 'Dörnberg bei Zierenberg', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 199–202

——, 'Helfensteine', in *Stadt und Landkreis Kassel*, ed. by Herrmann, pp. 196–99

Keefe, S. A., *Water and the Word: Baptism and the Education of the Clergy in the Carolingian Empire*, I: *A Study of Texts and Manuscripts* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002)

Keen, L. J., 'The Towns of Dorset', in *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England*, ed. by J. Haslam (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), pp. 203–47

Kehl, P., 'Entstehung und Verbreitung des Bonifatiuskultes', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 127–50

——, *Kult und Nachleben des hl. Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754–1200)*, Quellen und Abhandlung zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda, 26 (Fulda: Parzeller, 1993)

Kienast, W., *Die fränkische Vasallität* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1990)

Kilger, L., 'Bonifatius und seine Gefährten im Missionsdienst', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 51–57

Kirby, D. P., 'Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1966), 341–71

——, 'Problems of Early West Saxon History', *English Historical Review*, 80 (1965), 10–29

Klein, W. F., 'Purpose and the "Poetics" of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*', in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard*, ed. by L. E. Nicholson and D. W. Frese (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), pp. 208–23

Kleinheyer, B., *Die Priesterweihe im römischen Ritus: Eine liturgiehistorische Studie*, Trierer theologische Studien, 12 (Trier: Paulinus, 1962)

Kleinschmidt, H., 'The Geuissae and Bede: On the Innovativeness of Bede's Concept of the *Gens*', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint*, ed. by Hill and Swan, pp. 77–102

Klingelhöfer, E., *Manor, Vill and Hundred: The Development of Rural Institutions in Early Medieval Hampshire*, Studies and Texts, 112 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992)

Klingshirn, W. E., *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Knapp, A. B., and W. Ashmore, 'Archaeological Landscapes: Constructed, Conceptualised, Ideational', in *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by W. Ashmore and A. B. Knapp (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1–30

Knappe, R., *Mittelalterliche Burgen in Hessen* (Gudensberg-Gleichen: Wartberg, 2000)

Kneipp, J., *Versunkene Kulturen zwischen Bauna und Diemel* (Kassel: Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1996)

Knöppel, V., 'Der Hasunger Berg und die Christianisierung des Wolfhager Landes', *Jahrbuch der hessischen kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung*, 52 (2001), 53–65

Koch, U., 'Grabräuber als Zeugen frühen Christentums', *Archäologische Nachrichten aus Baden*, 11 (1973), 22–26

Kollmann, K., *Frau Holle und das Meißnerland* (Heiligenstadt: Cordier, 2005)

——, 'Sagen als Quellen der Regionalgeschichte', *ZHG*, 105 (2000), 201–10

Kramer, K., 'Bericht des Konservators', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 16 (1908), 93–101

——, 'Bericht des Konservators', *Mitteilungen des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins*, NF, 18 (1910), 137–45

——, 'Fränkische Funde aus dem oberhessischen Museum und den gailischen Sammlungen zu Gießen', *Volk und Scholle*, 3 (1925), 202–03

——, 'Gießen: Fränkisches Grab auf dem Exerzierplatz', *Römisch-Germanisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 3 (1910), 4–6

——, 'Gießen B: Frühfränkische Gräber auf dem Exerzierplatz', *Römisch-Germanisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 1 (1908), 17–19

Krüger, H., *Hessische Altstraßen des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, Hessische Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landes- und Volkskunde, 5 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963)

Krüger, S., *Studien zur sächsischen Grafschaftsverfassung im 9. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950)

Kryder-Reid, E., 'The Construction of Sanctity: Landscape and Ritual in a Religious Community', in *Landscape Archaeology*, ed. by Yamin and Methany, pp. 228–48

Kunkel, O., *Oberhessens vorgeschichtliche Altertümer* (Marburg: Elwert, 1926)

Kunter, K., 'Baggerfunde aus der Lahnaue bei Heuchelheim/Dutenhofen als Beitrag zur Besiedlungsgeschichte des Gießen-Wetzlarer Raumes', *FH*, 22/23 (1982/83), 120–27

——, 'Menschliche Überreste aus frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunden in Nordhessen (6.–9. Jh)', in *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde in Nordhessen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 235–77

——, 'Sterbwahrsheinlichkeit und Lebenserwartung in der nordhessischen Gemeinde Kirchberg (St Niedenstein, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) vom Mittelalter bis heute', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 193–201

Küther, W., *Historisches Ortslexikon des Landes Hessen*, 5 vols (Marburg: Elwert, 1980– )

Lachmann, H.-P., *Untersuchungen zur Verfassungsgeschichte des Burgwaldes im Mittelalter*, Schriften des hessischen Landesamtes für geschichtliche Landeskunde, 31 (Marburg: Elwert, 1969)

LaGrand, J., *The Earliest Christian Mission to the Nations in the Light of Matthew's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)

Laing, L. R., *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland, c. 400–1200* (London: Methuen, 1975)

Lamb, H. H., *Climate History and the Modern World* (London: Methuen, 1982)

Landau, G., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der alten Heer- und Handelstraßen in Deutschland*, Hessische Forschungen zur geschichtlichen Landes- und Volkskunde, 1 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958)

——, 'Der Heiligenberg', in *ZHG*, 8 (1860), 77–85

Lapidge, M., 'The Career of Aldhelm', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36 (2007), 15–69

——, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 15 (1986), 45–72

Larosz, L., 'Constructing the Dark Continent: Metaphor as Geographic Representation of Africa', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 74 (1992), 105–15

Latham, R. E., ed., *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965)

Law, V., 'The Study of Latin Grammar in Eighth-Century Southumbria', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 12 (1983), 43–71

Le Goff, J., *The Birth of Europe*, trans. by J. Lloyd (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)

——, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. by A. Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988)

Leidorf, M. L., 'Eine Notgrabung in der frühmittelalterlichen Wüstung Lampertshausen bei Ebsdorfergrund-Wittelsberg, Kr. Marburg-Biedenkopf', *FH*, 29/30 (1989/90), 331–42

Levison, W., *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946)

Liuzza, R. M., ed., *Old English Literature: Critical Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002)

Lochrie, K., '*Wyrd* and the Limits of Human Understanding: A Thematic Sequence in the *Exeter Book*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 85 (1986), 323–31

Löffler, K., *Der Hülfensberg im Eichsfeld eine Bonifatiusstätte?* (Duderstadt: Mecke, 1925)

Löwe, H., ed., *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982)

——, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius: Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 192–226

Lucy, S., and A. Reynolds, eds, *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 17 (London: Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2002)

Luig, U., 'Constructing Local Worlds: Spirit Possession in the Gwembe Valley', in *Spirit Possession: Modernity and Power in Africa*, ed. by H. Behrend and U. Luig (Oxford: Currey, 1999), pp. 124–41

Lutterbach, H., *Bonifatius, mit Axt und Evangelium: Eine Biographie in Briefen* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2004)

Lynker, K., *Deutsche Sagen und Sitten in hessischen Gauen*, 2nd edn (Kassel: Wigand, 1860)

Maclear, G. F., *A History of Christian Missions during the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863)

Maddicott, J., 'London and Droitwich, *c.* 650–750: Trade, Industry and the Rise of Mercia', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 7–58

——, 'Plague in Seventh-Century England', *Past and Present*, 156 (1997), 7–54

Maitland, F. M., *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897)

Manitius, M., *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 3 vols (Munich: Beck, 1911–31)

Maraval, P., 'The Earliest Phase of Christian Pilgrimage in the Near East (Before the 7th Century)', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 56 (2002), 63–74

Markus, R., *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

——, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 2 (1994), 257–71

Martin, M. A., 'Aspects of Winter in Latin and Old English Poetry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 68 (1969), 375–90

Mayr-Harting, H., *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (London: Batsford, 1991)

McGinn, B., 'Ocean and Desert as Symbols of Mystical Absorption in the Christian Tradition', *Journal of Religion*, 74 (1994), 155–81

McKenzie, P., *Hail Orisha! A Phenomenology of a West African Religion in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Religion in Africa, 19 (Leiden: Brill, 1997)

McKitterick, R., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences*, Eighth Annual Brixworth Lecture, Vaughan Papers, 36 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990) (repr. as R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995))

——, 'The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 9 (1989), 291–329 (repr. in R. McKitterick, *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms*, *6th–9th Centuries* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), chap. 4)

——, *Charlemagne: The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

——, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

——, 'The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 1–20

Meaney, A., *A Gazeteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964)

——, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries, Place-Names and Hundred Meeting Places', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), 29–42

Meens, R., 'The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance', in *Handling Sin*: *Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. Biller and A. J. Minnis, York Studies in Medieval Theology, 2 (York: York Medieval Press, 1998), pp. 35–61

Melbin, L., 'The Colonisation of Time', in *Human Activity and Time Geography*, ed. by T. Carlstein, D. Parkes, and N. Thrift (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), pp. 100–13

Metz, W., 'Gedanken zur frühmittelalterlichen Pfarrorganisation Althessens', *HJL*, 5 (1955), 24–56

Michels, H., 'Das Gründungsjahr der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 39 (1987), 11–42

Mildenberger, G., 'Das Ende der Altenburg bei Niedenstein', in *Marburger Beiträge zur Archäologie der Kelten: Festschrift für Wolfgang Dehn*, ed. by O. H. Frey (Bonn: Habelt, 1969), pp. 122–34

——, 'Nordhessen in der Völkerwanderungszeit', *HJL*, 16 (1966), 1–8

——, *Römerzeitliche Siedlungen in Nordhessen*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 3 (Marburg: Elwert, 1972)

——, 'Terra Nigra aus Nordhessen', *FH*, 12 (1972), 104–26

Milis, L. J. R., 'Introduction: The Pagan Middle Ages — A Contradiction in Terms?', in *Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. by Milis, trans. by Guest, pp. 1–12

Milis, L. J. R., ed., and T. Guest, trans., *The Pagan Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998)

Miller, D., and C. Tilley, 'Ideology, Power and Prehistory: An Introduction', in *Ideology, Power and Prehistory: New Directions in Archaeology*, ed. by D. Miller and C. Tilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–15

Miller, K. L., 'The Old High German and Old Saxon Charms: Text, Commentary and Critical Bibliography' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St Louis, 1963)

Moisl, H., 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition', *Journal of Medieval History*, 7 (1981), 215–48

Moran, D., *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000)

Moreland, J., 'Ethnicity, Power and the English', in *Social Identity*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrell, pp. 23–51

Morgenstern, C., *Naturdenkmale im Landkreis Kassel* (Kassel: Landkreis Kassel, 1990)

Morton, D., ed., *Excavations at Hamwic*, I: *Excavations, 1946–83*, CBA Research Report, 84 (York: CBA, 1992)

Mott, M., 'Der Name "Bonifatius" in den Flurbezeichnungen', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 195–202

Muir, R., 'Conceptualising Landscape', *Landscapes*, 1 (2000), 4–21

Müller, W., 'Jubiläen und Heiligengedenken: Von den mittelälterlichen Ursprungen bis zum Heiligenkult des 19. Jahrhunderts', in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Felten, pp. 115–30

Munby, J., ed., *Domesday Book*, IV: *Hampshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982)

Murdoch, B., 'But Did They Work? Interpreting the Old High German Merseburg Charms in their Medieval Context', *Neuphilogische Mitteilungen*, 89 (1988), 358–69

Murphy, G. R., *The Saxon Saviour: The Germanic Transformation of the Gospel in the Ninth-Century 'Heliand'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Muschiol, G., 'Königshof, Kloster und Mission — die Welt der Lioba und ihrer geistlichen Schwestern', in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Felten, pp. 99–114

Müssemeier, U., and others, *Chronologie der merowingerzeitlichen Grabfunde vom linken Nieder-rhein bis zur nördlichen Eifel*, Materialien zur Bodendenkmalpflege im Rheinland, 15 (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 2003)

Myers, J. N. L., *The English Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

Naumann, H. P., 'Disen', in *RGA*, IV (1984), 494–97

Naumann, L., 'Die Einfuhrung und Befestigung des Christentums in den Gauen Friesenfeld und Hassegau', *Manfelder Blätter*, 34/35 (1925), 1–83

Naylor, J., *An Archaeology of Trade in Middle Saxon England*, BAR British Series, 376 (Oxford: BAR, 2004)

Nelson, J., 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice', in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. by D. Cannadine and S. R. F. Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 137–80

Neumann, G., philological contribution to 'Chatti', in *RGA*, IV (1981), 377–78

Neville, J., *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, CSASE, 27 (1999)

Nichtweiß, B., ed., *Bonifatius in Mainz* (Mainz: Publikationen Bistum Mainz, 2005)

Niermeyer, J. F., and C. Van de Kieft, eds, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002)

Niemeyer, W., 'Ein Bemerkenswerter merowingischer Fund aus Niedervellmar bei Kassel', *ZHG*, 68 (1957), 209–12

——, 'Zur Klärung hessischer Stammesfragen des frühen Mittelalters: Bemerkung zum Bonifatius-brief 43', *ZHG*, 63 (1952), 13–26

Nixon, L., *Making a Landscape Sacred: Outlying Churches and Icon Stands in Sphakia, South-western Crete* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2006)

Noble, T. F. X., review of Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, *American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 888–89

Nonn, U., 'Zwangsmission mit Feuer und Schwert? Zur Sachsenmission Karls des Großen', in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. by Felten, pp. 55–74

Nottarp, H., 'Sachkomplex und Geist des kirchlichen Rechtsdenkens bei Bonifatius', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 173–96

Nürnberger, A. J., 'Die angebliche Unechtheit der Predigten des hl. Bonifatius', *Neues Archiv*, 14 (1889), 109–34

——, 'Die Bonifatius — literatur der Magdeburger Centuriatoren', *Neues Archiv*, 11 (1886), 9–41

——, 'Verlorene Handschriften der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius', *Neues Archiv*, 7 (1882), 353–81

O'Brien, E., *Post-Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England: Burial Practices Revealed*, BAR British Series, 289 (Oxford: Hedges, 1999)

O'Brien, P. T., 'The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18–20: A Missionary Mandate or Not?', *Evangelical Review*, 2 (1978), 254–67

O'Brien O'Keeffe, K., and A. Orchard, eds, *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, Toronto Old English Studies, 14, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005)

Odenthal, A., and others, eds, *Verspielen wir das Erbe des Heiligen Bonifatius? Theologische Betrachtungen aus Anlass seines 1250: Todestages*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften, 47 (Frankfurt a.M.: Knecht, 2005)

Ogilvy, J. D. A., *Books Known to the English, 597–1066* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1967)

Old, H. E., *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 6 vols (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998– )

Oliphant, S. G., 'The Story of the *Strix*: Ancient', *Transactions an Proceedings of the American Philological Society*, 44 (1913), 133–49

Orchard, A., 'Boniface', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by M. Lapidge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 69–70

—— , 'Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 30 (2001), 15–38

—— , *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE, 8 (1994)

Orton, P., 'The Form and Structure of *The Seafarer*', in *Old English Literature*, ed. by Liuzza, pp. 353–80

Otto, R., *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich: Beck, 2003)

—— , *Christianisierung im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2006)

—— , *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1998)

—— , *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 51 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2003)

—— , *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte, 83, 2nd edn (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1997)

—— , *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. by J. W. Harvey, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1950)

Palliser, D., 'Review Article: The "Minster Hypothesis": A Case Study', *Early Medieval Europe*, 5 (1996), 207–14

Palmer, J. T., *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages, 19 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009)

—— , 'Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World', *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (2007), 402–25

Parsons, D., 'British Caraticos, Old English Cerdic', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 33 (1997), 1–8

—— , 'Sites and Monuments of the Anglo-Saxon Mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal*, 140 (1983), 280–321

—— , 'Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence', *Early Medieval Europe*, 8 (1999), 31–67

Patze, H., 'Geschichte des Gießener Raumes von der Völkerwanderung bis zum 17. Jahrhundert', in *Gießen und seine Landschaft in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. by G. Neumann (Gießen: Hess, 1970), pp. 65–108

Pauli, L., 'Heidnisches und Christliches im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern', *Bayerisches Vorgeschichtsblatt*, 43 (1978), 147–57

Pelteret, D., 'Saint Wilfrid: Tribal Bishop, Civic Bishop or Germanic Lord?', in *The Community, the Family and the Saint*, ed. by Hill and Swan, pp. 159–80

Perron, A. M., review of Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, *Journal of Religion*, 78 (1998), 619–21

Pestell, T., *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c. 650–1200* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004)

Pestell, T., and K. Ulmschneider, eds, *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive Sites', c. 650–850* (Macclesfield: Windgather, 2003)

Philippson, E., *Germanisches Heidentum bei den Angelsachsen* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1929)

Pinder, E., *Bericht über die heidnischen Altertümer der ehemals kurhessischen Provinzen Fulda, Oberhessen*, Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, Supp. 6 (Kassel: Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 1878)

Pohl, W., *Die Germanen*, Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 57, 2nd edn (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004)

—— , 'Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 7–32

—— , 'Ethnicity, Theory and Tradition: A Response', in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillet, pp. 221–39

—— , 'Ethnizität des Frühmittelalters als interdisziplinäres Problem', *Das Mittelalter*, 4 (1999), 69–75

—— , 'Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: Eine Zwischenbalanz', in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. by K. Brunner and B. Merta (Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1994), pp. 9–26

Pohl, W., and H. Reimitz, eds, *Strategies of Distinction: The Constitution of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden: Brill, 1998)

Pollington, S., *Anglo-Saxon Burial Mounds: Princely Burials in the 6th and 7th Centuries* (Swaffham: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2008)

Polomé, E. C., 'Freyr', in *RGA*, IX (1976), 587–94

Powlesland, D., 'Early Anglo-Saxon Settlements: Structures, Form and Layout', in *Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Hines, pp. 101–24

Pratt, D., 'The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 30 (2001), 39–90

Prinz, F., 'Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission', in *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, ed. by Schäferdiek, pp. 445–65

Prinz, J., 'Die fränkische Mission in Hameln und die Anfänge des Bonifatiusstiftes', in *Geschichte der Stadt Hameln*, ed. by H. Spanuth, 2 vols (Hameln: Seifert, 1939–40), I, 65–73

Probst, P., 'Expansion and Enclosure: Ritual Landscapes and the Politics of Space in Central Malawi', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28 (2002), 179–98

Raabe, C., and others, eds, *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda: Parzeller, 1954)

Rademacher, H., 'Die Anfänge der Sachsenmission südlich der Lippe', in *Westfalia Sacra: Quellen und Forschungen zur Kirchengeschichte Westfalens*, ed. by H. Börsting and A. Schöer, 7 vols (Münster: Aschendorf, 1948–81), II (1950), 133–86

—— , 'Die erfolgreiche Sachsenmission des hl. Bonifatius im Jahr 738', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 38 (1954), 100–30

Radford, C. R., 'The Saxon House: A Review and Some Parallels', *Medieval Archaeology*, 1 (1957), 27–38

Rahner, H., 'Antenna Crucis II: Das Meer der Welt', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 66 (1942), 89–118

Rahtz, P., 'Buildings and Rural Settlement', in *Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by D. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 49–98

Rau, R., ed. and trans., *Die Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, 4b (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968)

Ravn, M., *Death, Ritual and Germanic Social Structure, c. AD 200–600*, BAR International Series, 1164 (Oxford: Hedges, 2003)

Reed, J. D., *Virgil's Gaze: Nation and Poetry in the 'Aeneid'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

Reimer, H., *Historisches Ortslexikon für Kurhessen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1926)

Rettberg, F. W., *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, II: *Die Geschichte der Kirche bei den Alamannen, Bayern, Thüringern, Sachsen, Friesen und Slaven* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1848)

Reuter, T., ed., *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980)

——, '"Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik" im Zeitalter Karl Martels: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 35–59

——, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in *The Greatest Englishman*, ed. by Reuter, pp. 71–94

Reynolds, A., 'Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth to Eleventh-Century England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*: *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, 12 (2003), 98–136

Reynolds, L. D., and L. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Reynolds, R. E., *The Ordinals of Christ from their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978)

Richards, M. P., 'The Manuscript Context of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions*, ed. by P. E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 171–92

Rigold, S. E., 'Litus Romanum: The Saxon Shore Forts as Mission Stations', in *The Saxon Shore*, ed. by D. E. Johnston, CBA Research Report, 18 (York: CBA, 1977), pp. 70–75

Rohrbacher, D., *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002)

Rollason, D., 'Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria', in *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1994 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by B. Thompson (Stamford: Watkins, 1999), pp. 59–74

Rösener, W., *Peasants in the Middle Ages*, trans. by A. Stützer (Cambridge: Polity, 1992)

Rosenwein, B., *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Rösing, F., 'Morphologie und Geologie', in *Landschaftsrahmenplan Naturpark Habichtswald*, ed. by Heintze, pp. 9–13

Roth, H., 'Bronzeherstellung und -verarbeitung während der späten römischen Kaiserzeit in Geismar bei Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis, und Altendorf bei Bamberg (Oberfranken)', *FH*, 19/20 (1979/80), 795–806

——, 'Frühmittelalterliche Archäologie', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 22–33

Roth, H., and E. Wamers, eds, *Hessen im Mittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1984)

Rühl, R., *Das hessische Bergland: Eine forstlich-vegetationsgeographische Übersicht* (Bad Godesberg: Bundesanstalt für Landeskunde und Raumforschung, 1967)

Russell, J. B., 'Saint Boniface and the Eccentrics', *Church History*, 33. 3 (1964), 235–47

Russell, J. C., *The Germanisation of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

Sallman, K., 'Reserved for Eternal Punishment: The Elder Pliny's View of Free Germania (HN. 16. 1–6)', *American Journal of Philology*, 108 (1987), 108–28

Samson, R., 'Social Structures from *Reihengräber*: Mirror or Mirage?', *Scottish Archaeological Review*, 4 (1987), 116–26

Saunders, T., 'Class, Space and "Feudal" Identities in Early Medieval England', in *Social Identity*, ed. by Frazer and Tyrell, pp. 209–32

Sawyer, P. H., 'Medieval English Settlements: New Interpretations', in *English Medieval Settlement*, ed. by P. H. Sawyer (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), pp. 1–8

Schaefer, U., 'Two Women in Need of a Friend: A Comparison of *The Wife's Lament* and Eangyth's Letter to Boniface', in *Germanic Dialects: Linguistic and Philological Investigations*, ed. by B. Brogyanyi and T. Krömmelbein, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 38 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1986), pp. 491–524

Schäferdiek, K., ed., *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, II: *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters* (Munich: Kaiser, 1978)

Schama, S., *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995)

Schieffer, R., 'Neue Bonifatius-Literatur', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 63 (2007), 111–23

——, 'Willibald', in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. by B. Wachinger, 2nd rev. edn, 14 vols (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2008), X (1999), cols 1154–56

Schieffer, T., *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1954)

Schier, K., 'Balder', in *RGA*, II (1976), 2–7

Schipperges, S., *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte, 79 (Mainz: Gesellschaft für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte, 1996)

Schlesinger, W., ed., *Althessen im Frankenreich*, Nationes, 2 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1975)

——, *Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1963)

——, 'Das Frühmittelalter', in *Geschichte Thüringens I: Grundlagen und frühes Mittelalter*, ed. by H. Patze and W. Schlesinger, Mitteldeutsche Forschungen, 48. 1 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1968), pp. 317–80

——, 'Die Franken im Gebiet Östlich des Rheins: Skizze eines Forschungsprogramms', *HJL*, 15 (1965), 1–22

——, 'Early Medieval Fortifications in Hesse: A General Historical Report', *World Archaeology*, 7 (1976), 243–60

——, ed., *Fritzlar im Mittelalter: Festschrift zur 1250-Jahrfeier* (Fritzlar: Magistrat der Stadt Fritzlar, 1974)

——, 'Zur politischen Geschichte der fränkischen Ostbewegung vor Karl dem Großen', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 9–61

Schmidt, K. D., 'Bonifatius und die Sachsen', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, ed. by Raabe and others, pp. 227–46

Schminke, J., 'Der Holle-Mythus am Meißner', *ZHG*, 4 (1847), 103–09

Schmoeckel, R., *Bevor es Deutschland gab: Expedition in unsere Frühgeschichte von den Römern bis zu den Sachsenkaisern* (Bergisch Gladbach: Lübbe, 2002)

Schoppa, H., 'Eine Bronzestatuette des Harpokrates aus Fritzlar-Geismar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *FH*, 14 (1974), 349–51

Schotten, J. H., N. Wand, and U. Weiß, 'Ausgrabungen in jüngerkaiserzeitlichen und früh- bis spätmittelalterlichen Siedlungsbereichen der Dorfwüstung Holzheim bei Fritzlar, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis', *FH*, 17/18 (1977/78), 213–60

Schröder, E., *Deutsche Namenkunde: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kunde deutscher Personen- und Ortsnamen* (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1938)

Schüling, H., 'Die Handbibliothek des Bonifatius: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 4 (1963), 286–347

Schülke, A., 'Die "Christianisierung" als Forschungsproblem der Südwestdeutschen Gräber-archäologie', *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters*, 27/28 (1999/2000), 85–117

Schulze, H. K., *Die Grafschaftsverfassung der Karolingerzeit in den Gebieten östlich des Rheins*, Schriften zur Verfassungsgeschichte, 19 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973)

Schwind, F., 'Die Franken in Hessen', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 211–80

——, 'Fritzlar zur Zeit des Bonifatius und seiner Schüler', in *Fritzlar im Mittelalter*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 69–88

——, 'Zur Geschichte des heute hessischen Raumes im Frühmittelalter', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 34–46

Seidel, M., 'Großromstedt- und älterkaiserzeitliche Siedlungskeramik aus Netze, Stadt Waldeck, Kreis Waldeck-Frankenberg', *FH*, 32/33 (1992/93), 111–27

Semmler, J., 'Mission und Pfarrorganisation in den rheinischen, mosel- und maasländischen Bistümern (5.–10. Jahrhundert)', in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto Medioevo: Espansione e resistenze*, SSCI, 28 (1982), pp. 813–88

Semple, S., 'Burials and Political Boundaries in the Avebury Region, North Wiltshire', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History: Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, 12 (2003), 72–91

——, 'Defining the Old English *Hearg*: A Preliminary Archaeological and Topographic Examination of *Hearg* Place-Names and their Hinterlands', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), 364–85

——, 'A Fear of the Past: The Place of the Prehistoric Burial Mound in the Ideology of Middle and Later Anglo-Saxon England', *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 109–26

Senior, D., and C. Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (London: SCM, 1983)

Sharpe, R., 'King Ceadwalla's Roman Epitaph', in *Latin Learning and English Lore*, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe and Orchard, I, 171–93

Siegmund, F., *Merowingerzeit am Niederrhein: Die frühmittelalterlichen Funde aus dem Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf und dem Kreis Heinsberg*, Rheinische Ausgrabungen, 34 (Cologne: Rheinland Verlag, 1998)

——, 'Social Relations among the Old Saxons', in *The Continental Saxons*, ed. by Green and Siegmund, pp. 77–95

Simek, R., *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. by A. Hall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993)

——, *Religion und Mythologie der Germanen* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2003)

Sims-Williams, P., *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Sippel, K., archaeological contribution to 'Hessen', in *RGA*, XIV (1999), 497–501

——, 'Archäologische Fundstellen und Funde aus mittelalterlicher Zeit im Stadtgebiet von Zierenberg', in *Zierenberg, 1293–1993*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg, pp. 42–56

——, ed., *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen in Hessen, Band 1*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 7 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpfege Hessen, 1989)

——, 'Die Ausgrabungen in der Pfarrkirche, auf dem Kirchhof und dem benachbarten Gutshof von Kircherg (St. Niedenstein, Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) in den Jahren 1979, 1980 und 1984', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 85–191

——, 'Die dunklen Jahrhunderte in der Geschichte Baunatals: Zur Völkerwanderungs- und Merowingerzeit in Nordhessen aufgrund archäologische Funde', in *Chronik der Stadt Baunatal*, I: *Lebensraum, Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Baunatal (Baunatal: Magistrat der Stadt Baunatal, 1994), pp. 205–26

——, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Grabfunde in Nordhessen*, Materialien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte von Hessen, 7 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 1989)

——, 'Die Grasburg bei Mansbach und benarchbarte Hügelgräber: Untersuchungen an zwei im ausgehenden 8. Jahrhundert genannten Plätzen im Kreis Hersfeld-Rotenburg', *FH*, 17/18 (1977/78), 266–87

——, 'Ein merowingisches Kammergrab mit Pferdegeschirr aus Eschwege, Werra-Meißner-Kreis (Hessen)', *Germania*, 65 (1987), 135–58

——, 'Kat. 24: Frauengrab unter einem Hügel', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 109

——, 'Kat. 126: Hügelgrab mit Körperbestattung', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 190

——, 'Kat. 127: Hügelgrab mit Brandbestattungen', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 191

——, 'Kat. 129: Hügelgräber mit Körperbestattungen', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, p. 193

——, 'Thüringische Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters in Osthessen: Archäologishe Quellen zur Westausdehnung thüringischer Besiedlung in karolingischer Zeit', in *Aspekte thüringisch-hessischer Geschichte*, ed. by M. Gockel (Marburg: Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliches Landeskunde, 1992), pp. 29–48

Sisam, K., 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287–348

Sladden, J. C., *Boniface of Devon: Apostle of Germany* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1980)

Smithers, G. V., 'The Meaning of *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*', *Medium Ævum*, 26. 3 (1957), 137–53

Sokolowski, R., *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Souter, A., ed., *A Glossary of Later Latin to A.D. 600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)

Speake, G., *A Saxon Bed Burial on Swallowcliffe Down*, HBMCE Report, 10 (London: Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, 1989)

Staab, F., 'Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der fränkischen und päpstlichen Politik', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 40 (1988), 13–41

——, 'Rudi populo rudis adhuc presul: Zu den wehrhaften Bischöfen der Zeit Karl Martells', in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, ed. by Jarnut, Nonn, and Richter, pp. 249–75

Stancliffe, C., 'The Kings Who Opted Out', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. by Wormald, Bullough, and Collins, pp. 154–76

——, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick, and D. Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46

——, *St Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 328–40

Steinmetz, W.-D., 'Watenstedt, die Hünenburg auf dem Heeseberg', in *Das Braunschweiger Land*, ed. by W.-D. Steinmetz, Führer zu archäologischen Denkmälern in Deutschland, 34 (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1997), pp. 277–81

Stengel, E. E., 'Politische Wellenbewegungen im hessisch-westfälischen Grenzgebiet', *Mitteilungen an die Mitglieder des Vereins für hessische Geschichte*, 25/26 (1927), 11–18

——, 'Zur Frühgeschichte der Reichsabtei Fulda', *Deutches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 9 (1952), 513–34

Stenton, F., *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971)

——, 'The Historical Bearing of Place-Names Studies: Anglo-Saxon Heathenism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (1941), 1–24

Stephan, H.-G., 'Mittelalterliche Töpferei in Niederhessen', *FH*, 32/33 (1992/93), 207–79

Steuer, H., 'Zur Bewaffnung und Sozialstruktur der Merowingerzeit', *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte*, 37 (1968), 18–87

Stevens, W., *Harmonium*, 2nd edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1931; repr. 2001)

Stoodley, N., 'Discussion: The Early Cemetery and its Place within Southern England', in *Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton*, by Birbeck and others, pp. 75–81

Sullivan, R. E., 'The Carolingian Missionary', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 705–40

——, 'Carolingian Missionary Theories', *Catholic Historical Review*, 42 (1956), 273–95

——, *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994)

——, 'Khan Boris and the Conversion of Bulgaria: A Case Study of the Impact of Christianity on a Barbarian Society', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 3 (1966), 55–139

Tangl, M., *Bonifatiusfragen*, Abhandlungen der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2 (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1919)

——, 'Das Bistum Erfurt', in *Geschichtliche Studien: Festschrift für Albert Hauck zum 70. Geburtstage*, ed. by S. Jenks (Leipzig: Freytag, 1916), pp. 108–20

——, 'Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe, Teil I', *Neues Archiv*, 40 (1916), 639–790

Tarlow, S., 'Emotion in Archaeology', *Current Anthropology*, 41 (2000), 713–46

Thacker, A., 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Blair and Sharpe, pp. 137–70

Thiedmann, A., 'Brigida auf dem Büraberg bei Fritzlar-Ungedanken — neue Einblicke in die Baugeschichte', *Hessen Archäologie*, 5 (2005), 99–102

——, *Die Siedlung von Geismar bei Fritzlar: Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in der vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Siedlung im Schwalm-Eder-Kreis*, Archäologische Denkmäler in Hessen, 2 (Wiesbaden: Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen, 2001)

——, 'Neue Forschungen zum Christenberg bei Münchhausen', *Hessen Archäologie*, 1 (2001), 126–28

Thiersch, K., 'Bauuntersuchung der Kapelle St Brigida auf dem Büraberg bei Fritzlar', *Denkmalpflege und Kulturgeschichte*, 2 (2003), 22–26

——, 'Die Brigidenkapelle aus archäologische Sicht', in *Die Kapelle St Brigida in Fritzlar-Ungedanken: Eine der ältesten Kirchen nördlich des Limes*, ed. by K. Thiersch and P. Trosser (Fritzlar: self-published by the Catholic parish of Fritzlar, 2008), pp. 12–23

Thom, C. P., 'The Ascetical Theology and Praxis of Sixth to Eighth Century Irish Monasticism as a Radical Response to the *Evangelium*' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Australian Catholic University, 2002)

Thomas, M. G., M. P. H. Stumpf, and H. Härke, 'Evidence for an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 273 (July 2006), 2651–57 (available online at <http://rspb.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/273/1601/2651.full.pdf+html> [accessed 30 September 2009])

Thornton, D., *Kings, Chronologies and Genealogies: Studies in the Political History of Early Medieval Ireland and Wales*, Prosopographia et Genealogica, 10 (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, Linacre College, 2003)

Tiefenbach, H., etymological contribution to 'Fritzlar', in *RGA*, X (1998), 87–89

Tilley, C., *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology* (Oxford: Berg, 2004)

——, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994)

——, 'The Powers of Rocks: Topography and Monument Construction on Bodmin Moor', *World Archaeology*, 28 (1996), 161–76

——, 'Round Barrows and Dykes as Landscape Metaphors', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 14 (2004), 185–203

Timmer, B. J., 'Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Prose and Poetry', *Neophilogus*, 26 (1941), 24–33

Toller, T. N., *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Supplement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921)

Treude, E., 'Die Höfe bei Dreihausen', *FH*, 39/40 (1999/2000), 1–72

Turner, S., *Making a Christian Landscape: The Countryside in Early Medieval Cornwall, Devon and Wessex* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2006)

Udolph, J., Namenkundliches contribution to 'Geismar', in *RGA*, X (1998), 584–86

Uenze, O., 'Volkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber aus Nordhessen', *FH*, 11 (1971), 80–94

Uhlhorn, F., 'Der geschichtliche Atlas von Hessen: Planung und Gestaltung', *HJL*, 23 (1973), 62–80

Uhlhorn, F., F. Schwind, and E. E. Stengel, eds, *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen* (Marburg: Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliche Landeskunde, 1984)

Uhlhorn, F., and M. Werner, 'Kirchliche Einteilung, Stifte und Klöster bis in das 16. Jh.', in *Geschichtlicher Atlas von Hessen*, ed. by Uhlhorn, Schwind, and Stengel, pp. 63–70

von Campenhausen, H. (Freiherr), *Die asketische Heimatlosigkeit im altkirchlichen und frühmittelalterlichen Mönchtum*, Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte, 149 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930)

Vonderau, J., *Denkmäler aus vor- und frühgeschichtliche Zeit im Fuldaer Lande*, Veröffentlichungen des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins, 21 (Fulda: Fuldaer Geschichtsverein, 1931)

—— , *Die Ausgrabungen am Büraberg bei Fritzlar 1926/31*, Veröffentlichungen des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins, 22 (Fulda: Fulda Aktiendruckerei, 1934)

von Padberg, L. E., 'Bonifatius — das Leben des Missionars', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 39–62

von Petrikovits, H., historical contribution to 'Chatten', in *RGA*, IV (1981), 379–85

von Roques, H., ed., *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Kaufungen in Hessen*, 2 vols (Kassel: Drewfs und Schönhoven, 1900–02)

von Steinmeyer, E. , *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1916)

von Uslar, R., *Westgermanische Bodenfunde des 1. bis 3. Jahrhunderts n. Christ aus Mittel- und Westdeutschland*, Germanische Denkmäler der Frühzeit, 3 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1938)

Vug, O., 'Die Schanzen in Hessen', *ZHG*, 25 (1890), 55–137

Wagner, H., *Bonifatiusstudien*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg, 60 (Würzburg: Schöningh, 2003)

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M., *The Frankish Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983)

Wamers, E., 'Kat. 50: Wadenbindengarnitur', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 130–31

—— , 'Zu den Anfängen der Altertumsforschung in Hessen', in *Hessen im Mittelalter*, ed. by Roth and Wamers, pp. 13–17

Wand, N., 'Archäologische Untersuchungen des Kirchhofbereiches St. Thomas in der Dorfwüstung Holzheim bei Fritzlar (Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) im Jahre 1980', in *Beiträge zur Archäologie mittelalterlicher Kirchen*, ed. by Sippel, pp. 47–75

—— , *Die Büraburg bei Fritzlar: Burg, 'Oppidum', Bischofsitz in karolingischer Zeit*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 4 (Marburg: Elwert, 1974)

—— , 'Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken in der merowingisch-karolingischen Zeit', in *Althessen in Frankenreich*, ed. by Schlesinger, pp. 173–210

—— , ed., *Holzheim bei Fritzlar: Archäologie eines mittelalterlichen Dorfes*, Kasseler Beiträge zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 6 (Rahden: Leidorf, 2002)

—— , 'Siedlungsarchäologische Untersuchungen im mittelalterlichen Dorf Holzheim bei Fritzlar', *Zeitschift geschichtlicher Politik und ihre Didaktik*, 14 (1986), 31–51

——, 'St Brigida auf dem Büraberg bei Fritzlar-Ungedanken (Schwalm-Eder-Kreis) — ein vorbonifatianisches Kloster der frühen Karolingerzeit', *ZHG*, 104 (1999), 11–36 (repr. in *Archäologisches Zellwerk: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte in Europa und Asien; Festschrift für Helmut Roth*, ed. by E. Pohl, U. Recker, and C. Theune (Rahden: Leiford, 2001), pp. 509–29)

Ward-Perkins, B., 'Why Did the Anglo-Saxons Not Become More British?', *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 513–33

Watkins, C. S., *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth Series, 66 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Wattenbach, W., W. Levison, and H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*: *Vorzeit und Karolinger*, II: *Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1953)

Weber, C., 'Bonifatius-Bibliographie', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 30 (1954), 86–87

——, 'Die Namen des heiligen Bonifatius', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter*, 30 (1954), 39–66

Weber, M., *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. by E. Fischoff (Boston: Beaker, 1956)

Weichlein, S., 'Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in *Bonifatius*, ed. by Imhof and Stasch, pp. 219–34

Wells, P. S., *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped Roman Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)

Wenck, H. B., *Hessische Landesgeschichte*, 3 vols (Frankfurt: Warrentrapp and Wenner, 1783–1803)

Wendehorst, A., *Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz: Das Bistum Eichstätt*, I: *Die Bischofsreihe bis 1535*, Germania Sacra, NF, 45 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006)

——, 'Die Iren und die Christianisierung Mainfrankens', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, I, 319–41

Werner, J., 'Zur Entstehung der Reihengräberzivilization: Ein Beitrag zur Methode der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie', *Archaeologia Geographica*, 1 (1950), 23–32

Werner, M., 'Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen', in *Die Iren und Europa*, ed. by Löwe, I, 239–318

Werner-Hasselbach, T., *Die älteren Güterverzeichnisse der Reichsabtei Fulda* (Marburg: Elwert, 1942)

Whitelock, D., 'The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', in *Essential Articles for the Study of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. by J. B. Bessinger and S. J. Kahrl (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1968), pp. 442–57

Williams, H., *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

——, 'Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 90–108

Wilmans, R., *Die Kaiserurkunden der Provinz Westfalen, 777–1313*, 2 vols (Münster: 1867–81)

Wilson, D., *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London: Routledge, 1992)

——, 'A Note on *Hearg* and *Weoh* as Place-Name Elements Representing Different Types of Pagan Saxon Worship Sites', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 4 (1985), 179–83

Winkelmann, W., 'Frühgeschichte und Frühmittelalter', in *Westfälische Geschichte: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des alten Reiches*, ed. by W. Kohl (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1983), pp. 187–230

Winterbottom, M., 'Tacitus', in *Texts and Transmissions: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. by L. D. Reynolds and L. G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 406–11

Wolfram, H., *History of the Goths*, trans. by T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988)

—— , *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*, trans. by T. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997)

Wood, I., 'An Absence of Saints? The Evidence for the Christianisation of Saxony', in *Am Vorabend der Kaiserkrönung: Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799*, ed. by P. Godman, J. Jarnut, and P. Johanek (Berlin: Akademie, 2002), pp. 335–52

—— , 'Beyond Satraps and Ostriches: Political and Social Structures of the Saxons in the Early Carolingian Period', in *The Continental Saxons*, ed. by Green and Siegmund, pp. 271–86

—— , 'Land Tenure and Military Obligations in the Anglo-Saxon and Merovingian Kingdoms: The Evidence of Bede and Boniface in Context', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 9/10 (2005), 3–22

—— , *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow: Longman, 2001)

—— , 'Pagan Religions and Superstitions East of the Rhine from the Fifth to the Ninth Century', in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. by G. Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 253–79

—— , 'Teutsind, Witlaic and the History of Merovingian *Precaria*', in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 31–52

Wormald, P., 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. by Bonner, pp. 141–69

—— , 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. by Wormald, Bullough, and Collins, pp. 99–129

—— , '*Engla Lond*: The Making of an Allegiance', *Journal of the Historical Society*, 7 (1994), 1–24

—— , *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London: Hambledon, 1999)

Wormald, P., D. Bullough, and R. Collins, eds, *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)

Wunder, H., 'Die Wigberttradition in Hersfeld und Fritzlar' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universität Erlangen-Nürnburg, 1969)

Wybourne, C., 'Seafarers and Stay-at-Homes: Anglo-Saxon Nuns and Mission', *Downside Review*, 114 (1996), 246–66

Yamin, R., and K. B. Methany, eds, *Landscape Archaeology: Reading and Interpreting the American Historical Landscape* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996)

Yorke, B., 'Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections', in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, ed. by K. Barker and N. Brooks (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010)

—— , 'Anglo-Saxon Origin Legends', in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters*, ed. by J. Barrow and A. Wareham (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 15–29

—— , 'The Bonifacian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 154–72

——, 'Fact or Fiction? The Written Evidence for the Fifth and Sixth Centuries AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 6 (1993), 45–50

——, 'The Insular Background to Boniface's Continental Career', in *Bonifatius, Leben und Nachwirken*, ed. by Felten, Jarnut, and von Padberg, pp. 23–38

——, 'The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the Origins of Wessex', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by S. Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 84–96

——, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Seaby, 1990)

——, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995)

Zeddies, N., 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: Die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter: Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion*, ed. by M. T. Fögen, Ius Commune Sonderheft, 70 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995), pp. 217–63

Zeiß, H., 'Hessische Brandbestattungen der jüngeren Merowingerzeit', *Germania*, 18 (1934), 279–84

*Zierenberg, 1293–1993: Ausgewählte Aspekte aus 700jähriger Geschichte*, ed. by Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg (Kassel: Magistrat der Stadt Zierenberg, 1993)

# INDEX

# CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

All volumes in this series are evaluated by an Editorial Board, strictly on academic grounds, based on reports prepared by referees who have been commissioned by virtue of their specialism in the appropriate field. The Board ensures that the screening is done independently and without conflicts of interest. The definitive texts supplied by authors are also subject to review by the Board before being approved for publication. Further, the volumes are copyedited to conform to the publisher's stylebook and to the best international academic standards in the field.

## Titles in Series

*De Sion exhibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on Medieval Law, Liturgy, and Literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen (2001)

Amnon Linder, *Raising Arms: Liturgy in the Struggle to Liberate Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (2003)

Thomas Deswarte, *De la destruction à la restauration: L'idéologie dans royaume d'Oviedo-Léon (VIIIᵉ–XIᵉ siècles)* (2004)

*The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages (Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries): Proceedings of the International Symposium held at Speyer, 20–25 October 2002*, ed. by Christoph Cluse (2005)

*Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. by Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (2006)

Carine van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord: Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (2007)

*Avicenna and his Legacy: A Golden Age of Science and Philosophy*, ed. by Y. Tzvi Langermann (2009)

*Writing 'True Stories': Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East*, ed. by Arietta Papaconstantinou, in collaboration with Muriel Debié and Hugh Kennedy (2009)

## In Preparation

*Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella: Ninth-Century Commentary Traditions on Martianus's 'De nuptiis' in Context*, ed. by Mariken Teeuwen and Sinead O'Sullivan